

Hafa Adai!

Senate confirms Attao, Johnson, Borja, San Nicolas. **PAGE 2**
\$25K bail for man facing gun charges. **PAGE 3**



\$1

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Senate OKs EVS-TAP resolution

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

» **Resolution asks Palacios to advocate for special visa for Chinese tourists**

The Senate adopted yesterday a resolution to request Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to advocate for the increased security of the tourism industry, while promoting economic recovery, through the promulgation of the CNMI Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program for Chinese tourists.

See **SENATE** on Page 4



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), extreme left, talks about the need for the adoption of his Senate Joint Resolution to request Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to advocate for the promulgation of the CNMI Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program for Chinese tourists, during a Senate session yesterday.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

A total of 13 non-profit organizations pose with Bridge Capital LLC's management team, led by CEOs John Baldwin and Shawn Scott, and first lady Wella Palacios, after receiving donations this holiday season from both entities. This came after Bridge Capital's generous \$50,000 donation to the First Lady Wella Palacios Foundation yesterday at the Office of the Governor on Capital Hill.

Bridge Capital's \$50K donation benefits 14 organizations in all

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

14 nonprofit organizations in the CNMI.

In the spirit of Christmas, Bridge Capital LLC donated \$50,000 to the First Lady Wella Palacios Foundation yesterday, with a substantial share of the funds benefiting

It was learned during the short handover ceremony at the Office of the Governor on Capital Hill that an estimated 60% of the \$50,000 will go to the 14 nonprofit organizations,

See **BRIDGE** on Page 4



Auto-pedestrian crash lands man in CHCC

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

An auto-pedestrian crash over the weekend landed a man in the Commonwealth Health Center where he was checked and treated. There was no immediate word on

the extent of his injuries.

The man was hit by a car along Middle Road just across Mobil Middle Road last Sunday, at around 6:36pm.

The Department of Public Safety and first responders have yet to issue statements

See **CRASH** on Page 4

Torres' motion for declaratory relief is now deemed moot

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The parties involved in the ongoing criminal case against former governor Ralph DLG Torres have agreed that Torres' motion for declaratory

relief to prevent former special prosecutor James Kingman from prosecuting the case is now moot.

During a motion hearing last Monday before Superior Court judge pro tem Arthur

See **TORRES** on Page 4

CHRYSTAL MARINO

From left Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Bridge Capital LLC CEOs Shawn Scott and John Baldwin, first lady Wella Palacios, and Bridge Capital vice president Bart Jackson pose for a photo after donations were made and distributed yesterday at the Governor's Office on Capital Hill.

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Bolis R Us II is taking its talents to northern Beach Road or to Garapan to be more precise, just beside TSL Plaza.

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NATION

Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott approved sweeping new powers that allow police to arrest migrants who illegally cross the U.S. border.

PAGE 12



WORLD

The U.N. Security Council delayed until Tuesday morning a vote on an Arab-sponsored resolution calling for a halt to hostilities in Gaza.

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Local

Senate confirms Attao, Johnson, Borja, San Nicolas

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The Senate confirmed yesterday the separate appointment of four nominees to serve as board members of the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, Commonwealth Economic Development Authority, and CNMI Scholarship.

All eight senators present at the session voted “yes” to confirm the appointment of Catherine Marie Attao and Roland Johnson to serve as members of the NMTI board, Frank Lee SN. Borja to serve as a member of the CEDA board, and Patricia Joy S. San Nicolas to serve as a member of the CNMI Scholarship board.

Attao will represent Saipan, the Northern Islands, and women on the NMTI board. She will serve a four-year term and, because the terms of the trustees are staggered, her term will expire on March 11, 2027.

Johnson will represent Saipan, the Northern Islands, and businesses on the NMTI board. He will serve the remaining four years of



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Senators pose with the Palacios-Apatang administration's newly confirmed appointees Frank Lee SN. Borja, Catherine Marie Attao, and Roland Johnson in the Senate chamber yesterday. Borja was appointed to serve in the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority board, while Attao and Johnson were nominated to serve in the Northern Marianas Technical Institute board. Not in the photo is Patricia Joy S. San Nicolas who was also confirmed to serve as a member of the CNMI Scholarship board of directors.

a previously vacant four-year term that's expiring on March 11, 2027.

Borja and San Nicolas will represent Tinian and Aguihan on the CEDA board and CNMI Scholarship board, respectively.

Borja will serve another four-year term, which will expire on Sept. 25, 2027. He started serving the board of the then-Commonwealth Development Authority (now called CEDA) in 2017.

Sean Paul B. Reyes, who is the special projects coordinator at the Office of the Gover-

nor, said the Senate's confirmation of the four nominees is “just a step forward as the administration complete the vacancies for all boards and commission.”

Attao was re-appointed last Oct. 26 and the public hearing to assess her credentials was conducted last Nov. 14.

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee, said that Attao is no stranger to her post as she previously served that same position. She said Attao

is also no stranger to NMTI's challenges and achievements.

Babauta said Attao recounted during the hearing her experiences and challenges during her previous tenure as a member of the trustees and is willing to continue the task to fully develop NMTI into a regional model to supply skilled workers to the Commonwealth workforce.

As for Johnson's appointment, he was nominated last Nov. 2 and appeared before the committee last Nov. 14. Babauta said Johnson's unique experience in auto mechanics

spans over 55 years of technical and hands-on experience.

She said the committee has full confidence in Johnson's expertise and experience and knowledge that he is a good fit to serve on the NMTI board.

With respect to Borja's appointment, he was nominated last Nov. 9 and his conduct and credentials were scrutinized in a committee meeting held on Tinian last Nov. 13.

Babauta said Borja has previously served on the CDA board prior to this nomination and the committee did not receive any letters

or oral testimony opposing his nomination.

She said Borja's credentials include being a graduate of the University of Guam and the University of Texas and based on his articulation during his examination hearing, the committee confidently endorses his confirmation.

Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian) said Borja's résumé speaks for itself and the nominee himself made the decision to return to the CNMI and provide his expertise and knowledge to the second senatorial, as well as the CNMI.

“It's important that we continue to encourage our people to come back and give in any capacity in any way that they can,” King-Nabors said.

Regarding San Nicolas' appointment, she was nominated last Oct. 26 and her qualifications, experience and education, as well as her professional conduct, were scrutinized in a committee meeting held last Nov. 13 on Tinian.

Babauta said San Nicolas' communication skills, her conduct and her commitment to education bodes well to be a member of the CNMI scholarship board. San Nicolas is an educator by profession.

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\$25K bail for man facing gun charges

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a \$25,000 cash bail on a man facing multiple gun charges after he was caught throwing a bag out of a car window at a traffic stop. The bag was allegedly later found to contain a handgun.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed Monday a \$25,000 cash bail on Alexander Palacios Borja Jr., 32, who is facing gun-related charges for violating firearm regulations

including storage of firearms, lawful transportation of firearms, persons permitted to possess ammunition, removal of a firearm's serial numbers, and firearm owner's identification card requirement exceptions.

After his bail hearing last Monday, Borja was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody and was ordered to return to court on Dec. 27, at 10am for his preliminary while his arraignment was set for Jan. 8, 2024.

During the bail hearing, the Office of the Public Defend-

er was appointed to represent Borja while Chief Prosecutor Chester Hinds appeared for the government.

According to court documents, police conducted a violator stop on a green Hyundai Tucson operated by Borja last Dec. 14, because the car was being driven with no lights on the car's rear license plate.

As the first officer was approaching Borja, another officer said they saw a black bag fly out of the passenger-side window and land on the ground. Upon opening the bag, police found a Glock handgun loaded with a magazine clip.

When police asked Bor-

ja about the bag, he initially claimed that he did not know who owns the bag. Later, however, Borja allegedly admitted to police that he grabbed the black bag from the back seat and threw it out of the passenger-side window, as he was afraid he may be charged with possession of a firearm.

He added that the Glock handgun inside the black bag belonged to his godbrother, who told him to hold it for him until he was released from prison.

After the traffic stop, police impounded Borja's car and Borja was transported to the Department of Public Safety.



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Alexander Palacios Borja Jr., left, is escorted by a Department of Corrections officer to his bail hearing before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho last Monday.



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AND THANK YOU TO THE GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS WITH HEARTS OF GOLD
WHO SHARED THEIR BLESSINGS TO OUR YOUNG ARTISTS THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON!

DeLeon Guerrero forms conference panel for House-nixed appropriation bill

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) announced yesterday that she has organized a conference committee for the Senate that will sit down with its House of Representatives counterparts to hammer out an acceptable version of a bill that would mandate the Legislature to appropriate all federal funds allocated to the CNMI.

This comes soon after the House soundly rejected the Senate's version of the bill, House Bill Number 23-9, House Substitute 1, Senate Draft 1.

DeLeon Guerrero said during the Senate session that this Senate team is critical for

the Commonwealth primarily because there are some funds that were reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to the CNMI government.

The president said there has to be some kind of understanding of how they will define which funds that go into the general fund are considered for legislative appropriations or not.

She said the timing of all of these reimbursements is quite critical because there is a 360-day rule with respect to government accounting.

"The team, I believe, is ready to address the issue. And hopefully we can come out with a great product with

the House conferees as well," DeLeon Guerrero said.

She appointed Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) as chair on the Senate Conference Committee and Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian) as vice chair, Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) as member, and Sen. Dennis M. Mendiola (R-Rota) as alternate member.

The House rejected on Thursday H. B. Number 23-9, House Substitute 1, Senate Draft 1.

Rep. Denita K. Yangetmai (D-Saipan), who is the principal author of the legislation, said they are rejecting the Senate amendments for the reason that the reimbursements are not new funds that need to be

re-appropriated.

Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) said a lot of these federal funds are essentially used for disasters. He said the government uses

general fund monies to address disaster expenditures, therefore it's kind of eats into the CNMI's coffers.

Attao said when the federal agencies remit the money

back to the CNMI, the government is just putting it back to the general fund. He said what the Senate amendment does is it double taxes the general fund.



DeLeon Guerrero

Hawaii governor wants 3,000 vacation rentals converted to housing for Maui wildfire survivors

HONOLULU (AP)—Hawaii Gov. Josh Green on Friday said he wants 3,000 condos and homes that are normally rented to Maui tourists converted to long-term housing for displaced wildfire survivors who are now living in hotels.

Green said he's prepared to use the "hammer" of post-fire emergency orders to make

sure owners of short-term vacation rentals extend them to long-term units if enough spaces aren't converted voluntarily by mid-January.

The governor said that as of Thursday, there were 6,297 residents still living in hotels more than four months after the Aug. 8 wildfire wiped out historic Lahaina. The vast majority don't have anywhere else to go given the extreme housing shortage on Maui.

The lack of stable housing

has been a source of stress for Lahaina residents, some of whom have had to switch hotel rooms multiple times since the fire. One group is camping out on Kaaanapali Beach in front of resort hotels and vows to stay there until short-term rentals are converted for the use of residents.

Green said a combination of county tax incentives and generous rent subsidies offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency should help.

Song, Zhang make Bob Jones University president's list

GREENVILLE, SC—Saipan's Jiahuo Song and Yurong Zhang are among approximately 680 Bob Jones University students named to the president's list for high academic achievement during the Fall 2023 semester.

Song is a freshman engi-

neering major, while Zhang is a sophomore Studio Art major from Saipan.

To qualify for the President's List, students must earn a 3.75 or higher grade point average for the semester.

Located in Greenville, South Carolina, Bob Jones

University provides an outstanding regionally accredited Christian liberal arts education purposely designed to inspire a lifelong pursuit of learning, loving and leading.

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fine arts and communication, arts and science, health professions, and business.

BJU has over 3,000 students from nearly every state and more than 40 countries. The school is committed to the truth of scripture and to pursuing excellence in all it does. **(PR)**

SENATE

From page 1

Speaking during yesterday's Senate session, Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), who is the author of Senate Joint Resolution 23-07, thanked for the meeting Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero's (D-Saipan) called last week, when they heard from officials of the Hotel Association of the NMI, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and the Society for Human Resources

Management.

At that meeting, business community representatives talked about the challenges their members are having and other issues the CNMI is facing with the economy.

Hofschneider said he believes those who participated in the discussion support their joint resolution's request and will continue working to revive the tourism industry and the CNMI's economy recovery.

"This is one component of that effort to hopeful-

ly rebound...our economy here. And this is something that is critical at this juncture," he said.

In a recent joint letter addressed to CNMI leaders, HANMI and the Chamber urged the CNMI government to back the proposed EVS-TAP, as this, according to the groups, will address the concerns about the discretionary parole program.

The proposed EVS-TAP will allow prescreened People's Republic of China nationals to travel to the CNMI

without a visa under specific conditions.

EVS-TAP was one of the recommendations of 902 Consultation special representatives in their report dated May 15, 2019 to then-president Donald Trump.

Four U.S. senators and 28 U.S. House members signed a letter dated Nov. 30, 2023, requesting the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to revoke the discretionary parole program that allows it to let Chinese tourists enter the CNMI without a tourist visa.

BRIDGE

From page 1

and members of these organizations, except for one, were present for the donation.

John Baldwin, Bridge Capital's founder and CEO, was joined by Bridge Capital vice president Bart Jackson and co-CEO Sean Scott, for the presentation of the check to first lady Wella Palacios and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

During her remarks, Wella Palacios thanked Bridge Capital for its support and generous donation. "We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to Bridge Capital for their generous donation to the various non-profits under the First Lady Wella Foundation," she said.

The donations went to the following:

■ Center for Living Inde-

pendently, \$5,000;

■ Friends of Joeten Kiyu Public Library, \$2,500;

■ Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, \$2,500

■ Autism Society of the CNMI, \$1,000;

■ Salvation Army, \$1,000;

■ Marianas Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations, \$2,000;

■ Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, \$2,000;

■ 500 Sails, \$5,000

■ Talaya Club, \$1,000

■ Saipan Humane Society, \$2,000

■ Tasi to Table, \$1,500

■ Saipan Senior Advisory Council, \$2,500;

■ American Red Cross-NMI Chapter, \$2,500;

■ NMI Crimestoppers, \$2,000

"We are very happy to make these donations and to help. It's just a wonderful thing to

do during the holiday season. Thank you all for all you do for everybody," said Baldwin.

His message of appreciation to the beneficiaries was echoed by Scott: I think this day belongs to all of you because it's the work you do every day of the year to make our community better, and we really appreciate your efforts..."

Jackson said that Bridge Capital works closely with the First Lady Wella Foundation on the donation, with about 60% of the funds distributed yesterday and the rest of the money will remain with the foundation for good works and support throughout the year.

Erlinda Naputi of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, who was present to receive the check on behalf of the library's nonprofit organization, Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu

CRASH

From page 1

about the incident.

According to bystanders, the man is known in the area as "homeless" and regularly roams the streets of Middle Road and Garapan to ask for money.

A woman who claims she saw the crash as it happened said the man was crossing just across Gene's Barbershop

when a dark car hit him. Fortunately, the car stopped and the person in the car immediately got down and tried to help.

About four minutes after the crash, at around 6:40pm, DPS officers and Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services first responders were on scene.

The man was transported to the CHCC for treatment and *Saipan Tribune* learned that he survived the incident.

TORRES

From page 1

Barcinas, the parties in the criminal case against Torres agreed that the former governor's request for declaratory relief preventing Kingman from prosecuting him is now moot because Kingman has now been sworn in as an assistant attorney general.

Torres' lawyer, Viola Alepuyo, explained that the defense initially sought to prevent Kingman from prosecuting this case as a special prosecutor, but that no longer applies since Kingman is now a full-fledged AAG.

According to the motion for declaratory relief, Torres said the court should prevent Kingman from prosecuting the case because Kingman's contract with the attorney general is invalid and unlawful.

Torres explained this is because the attorney general lacks the authority to appoint and hire a special prosecutor for the misconduct in public office case filed against the former governor relating to first class travel.

Kingman, for his part, had argued that Torres' motion was then and remains improper because, since the motion was filed, the Supreme Court

has ruled that the contract at issue was terminated as the special prosecutor and the attorney general moved from a legal services contract to an employment contract.

The parties agreed on this point during last Monday's hearing.

Kingman was hired back in March for the sole purpose of prosecuting Torres' criminal case that's pending in Superior Court.

Kingman's initial contract with the OAG was set to expire by the end of this year, but it's believed that he was appointed as an AAG so that he can continue to serve as the head prosecutor for Torres' case, which remains without a trial date.

After Kingman's appointment, Torres' defense team raised questions about his appointment, such as why Kingman's salary is higher than that of the chief prosecutor for the OAG's Criminal Division, why was Kingman not hired as an AAG to begin with, and more.

Torres' defense team says the OAG should also explain to the public why it is paying Kingman so much, specifically \$85,000 annually.

Overall, Torres' defense team was not in favor of the OAG's conduct concerning Kingman's appointment.

KHS JROTC spreads holiday cheer to *man'amko*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kagman High School JROTC and the *man'amko* of the Aging Center pose for a group photo.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Nesian Harmony Band entertains the *man'amko* of the Aging Center.

Kagman High School JROTC cadets visited the Saipan Aging Center to spread the holiday cheer to 67 *man'amko* congregants last Dec. 6.

The event started with a drill demonstration led by the exhibition drill team of KHS JROTC.

They thrilled the *man'amko* with their fancy drill movements. The 76 KHS cadets also sang 15 different Christmas songs with the Nesian Harmony Band.

The *man'amko* audience was delighted and also sang along with the carolers.

KHS cadets then handed out personalized self-made Christmas cards to each of the *man'amko* and then got them a Christmas lunch provided by Kagman High School.

The Christmas show made the *man'amko* very happy for the holiday season. The visit to the Aging Center was all part of the KHS cadets' Service Learning Project for JROTC. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A cadet of the Kagman High School JROTC talks to the *man'amko* of the Aging Center.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A Kagman High School JROTC cadet spends some time with *man'amko* congregants of the Aging Center.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: DPW24-ITB NO.: 42400014

SUBMISSION DATE: January 12, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“Renovation of Marine Beach Restroom and Replacement of Existing Damage Concrete Picnic Tables Five (5) and Barbeque Pits Five (5).”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.


The project package will be available on or after **December 13, 2023** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of pay-ment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 29, 2023**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Project Site at Marine Beach**, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 05, 2024** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES




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NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public land in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot 013 E 03, containing an area of approximately 10,630 square meters, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. A map showing the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective Lessee is The Pacific Line Corporation. The list of officers for The Pacific Line Corporation: Lee, Cun Ki, as President/ Treasurer and Eric Cruz, as Vice President and Jooyoon Delos Reyes, as Secretary.

iii. The proposed lease is compliant with DPL regulations and was negotiated by the officers and directors of The Pacific Line Corporation, mainly by Eric Cruz and Jooyoon Delos Reyes.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of a recycling center.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term of the lease agreement is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property plus the applicable percentage of Business Gross Receipts in DPL's regulation.

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on \ the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; 1st floor of the De'Ana Commercial Building, Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of the PM Building, Tinian. A copy will also be available online at www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before January 1, 2024, at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

NUTISIA PUT I MAPROPONI NA ATKILON TĀNU' PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku mannānā'i nutisia guini put i intension-riha para u ma'atila metton na tanu' pupbliku giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Mariānas. Maseha hāyi na pattidā intrisao gi halum hinirāt pupbliku siha muna'hālum upiñon, infotmasion, pat testimoniuin kinontra gi tinahguin prinoponi siha para i atkilon nu i tanu' pupbliku. Kumu mapribeni mās mo'na ginin i Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i tinattiyi pettanesi na infotmasion manisista para u mapupb-liku.

i. I maproponi na atkilon tanu' pupbliku madiskribi kumu Lot 013 E 03, ni kunsissisti kási 10,630 square meters, ni gaigi gi hālum Lower Base, Saipan. I māpa ni a'annuk i pāttin i lugāt managuaha gi ufisinan Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku para inspeksion.

ii. I prospective lessee sa I Pacific Line Corporation. I listan nu ufisiāt siha para I Pacific Line Corporation: si Lee, Cun Ki, komu Presidenti/Tresureru yan si Eric Cruz, komu Sigundu Presidenti yan si Jooyoon Delos Reyes, komu Sekritāriu.

iii. I maproponi na atkilon ha tattiyi i regulasion DPL siha yan ginen manegosiu ni ufisiāt yan direktor-riha I Pacific Line Corporation, mayotmenti ginen as Eric Cruz yan si Jooyoon Delos Reyes.

iv. I lessee debi na u usa i lugāt put atyu ha' na rason nu i recycling center.

I tema nu i maproponi na kuntrātan atkilon sa' bentisingku (25) ānus na tiempu.

I maproponi na atkilon gi kada' sākkan gi durāntin teman kontrātan i` atkilon mapega gi put sientus nu i bālin "appraised fair market" i propiedāt yan i aplikāo na put sientus nu i "Business Gross Receipts" gi halum i regulasion DPL.

v. I kopian nu i maproponi na kuntrātan atkilon siha machuli' gi ufisinan i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku ni gaigi gi sigundu (2nd) na bibiendan i Joeten Dandan Commercial Building iya Dandan, Saipan, primet (1st) na bibiendan i De'Ana Commercial Building, iya Songsong Village, Luta; pat i primet (1st) na bibiendani PM Building, giya Tinian. I kopia debi lokku' na managuaha online gi www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. I Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku tāya marisibi ni hāfa na tinahguin inofresi siha ni para u ma'atila i suhetu na tanu' pupbliku gi Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. I Sekritāriu Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku debi na u aksepta tinigi' upiñon, infotmasion, testimoniuin kinontra pat tinahguin prinoponi siha ginin i manintirisao na pattida siha gi pat āntis di Ineru 1, 2024, gi ufisinan Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha ni gaigi giya Saipan, Luta pat Tinian.

ARONGORONGOL PPWOMMWOL ATKILÓÓNOL FALÚW

Sángi Tāilil 106 (b) reel Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re isiisiwow arongorong igha re mǎngemángil rebwe atkilaay faluweer toulap Ilól Seipél, Commonwealth Téel Falúw kka Efang Ilól Marianas. Schóo kka re tipáli sǎngi toulap emmwel rebwe isiisilong ischil kkapas, data, views, ngare angieingil ppwomm ikka aa siwel ngáli ppwommwol atkiloónol faluweer toulap. Re bwal ayoora sǎngi Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, arongorong ikka e ffil ebwe akkatééwow e amwirimwiriti:

i. Ppwommwol atkiloónol faluweer toulap e bwaá bwe Lot 013 E 03, e lo 10,630 reel square meters, iye e lo Lower Base, Seipél. E bwaálo wóol móopal falúw eyoor me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap reel ubwe amwuri.

ii. Ppwommwol schóol atkiloón nge Pacific Line Corporation. List-al officers ngáli Pacific Line Corporation: Lee, Cun Ki, bwe president/Treasurer me Eric Cruz, bwe Vice President me Jooyoon Delos Reyes, bwe Sekkretóóriya.

iii. Ppwommwol atkiloón e angúungú fengál me mwóghutughutúl DPL me e abwungubwung sǎngi officers me director-il Pacific Line Corporation, spesiatmente Eric Cruz me Jooyoon Delos Reyes.

iv. Rebwe yáali ppwommwol atkiloón ngáli leliyal recycling.

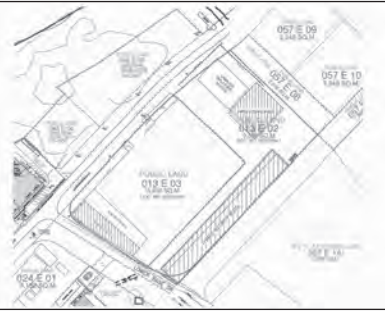

Ppwommwol abwungunwungúl atkiloón nge ruweigh me limoow ráagh.

Ppwommwol atkiloón ghal ráagh atol abwungubwungúl atkiloón yeel nge e lo reel percentage-il appraised fair market value reel falúw fengál me application percentage reel Gross Receipts Ilól mwóghutughutúl DPL.

v. Pappidil ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atkiloón nge emmwel ubwe bweibwogh me reel Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap, iye e lo 2nd floor me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building me Dandan, Seipél; 1st floor reel De'Ana Commercial Building, Apilómwol Songsong, Luuta; ngare 1st floor me PM Building, Tchiliyól. Ebwal yoor pappid emmwel ubwe amwuri online me www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap rese bweibwogh siwelil ppwommw reel atkiloónol faluweer toulap iye e lo Alal Ghaloowa, Seipél.

vii. Sekkretóóriyal Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re bweibwogh ischil kkapas, views, angieingi ngare siwelil ppwommw sǎngi schóo kka re mwuschel wóol ngare mmwalil Eneero1, 2024, me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap iye e lo Seipél, Luuta ngare Tchiliyól.





USGS
The U.S. Coast Guard's Air Station Barbers Point MH-65 Dolphin located three mariners and a dog off Kauai last Wednesday.

Coast Guard rescues 3 mariners and dog off Kauai

HONOLULU, Hawaii—The U.S. Coast Guard rescued three mariners and a dog aboard a disabled vessel off Kauai, Wednesday.

The disabled sailing vessel, *Isle Time*, was located by an Air Station Barbers Point MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew approximately 30 miles offshore.

At 3:17pm, Wednesday, Coast Guard Sector Honolulu watchstanders received an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon distress alert plotting 30 nautical miles north-east of Kauai.

Upon notification, watchstanders issued an urgent marine information broadcast notice to mariners and deployed a Dolphin helicopter aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point.

At 6:04pm, Wednesday, the Dolphin helicopter aircrew

located the disabled sailing vessel and deployed a rescue swimmer on board. An Air Station Barbers Point C-130J Hercules aircrew provided overwatch of the vessel while the Dolphin helicopter aircrew refueled on Kauai, later returning to safely recover the three mariners and their dog by conducting multiple hoists.

It was reported that the disabled vessel had a broken bilge pump and was taking on water due to the onset of water over the bow and adverse weather conditions.

The Sector Honolulu Command Center issued a hazard to navigation broadcast and is currently monitoring the situation with the vessel currently adrift.

The three mariners and dog were reported to be in stable condition. **(PR)**

Council members recollect WCPFC decisions and set ACLs for American Samoa bottomfish

HONOLULU, Hawaii—Outcomes from the 20th annual meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission meeting dominated council discussion. The WCPFC, meeting in the Cook Islands, increased the U.S. Hawaii-based longline fishery bigeye tuna catch limit from 3,554 to 6,554 metric tons after considering the healthy stock status and the highly monitored and compliant nature of the fishery.

However, the United States was unsuccessful in preserving a key provision in the tropical tuna conservation and management measure allowing for the transfer of catch to the Hawaii longline fishery. The funds derived from these specified fishing agreements have supported fishery development initiatives in the U.S. Pacific Territories described in Marine Conservation Plans in alignment with the council's Fishery Ecosystem Plans.

Council members, the chair, the heads of delegation for American Samoa and CNMI, and the Executive Director were alarmed and frustrated about the lack of communications during the negotiations within the U.S. delegation. Subsequently, the U.S. government was highly restrictive on all communications with other delegations and the WCPFC Scientific Services Provider.

Both the CNMI and American Samoa heads of delegation were shocked by a U.S. intervention that stated the U.S. territories have no longline fleets or aspirations for fishery development in the foreseeable future. Guam, the CNMI and American Samoa are Participating Territories that have similar rights and aspirations as other Pacific Island Small Island Developing States.

"I wanted to speak up, but didn't out of concern that it would affect all that we tried to get done," Archie Soliai, council member and American Samoa head of delegation. He added, "The loss of fisheries development funding was

disappointing, to say the least, but we expect the U.S. federal government to replace these funds." In addition to NOAA, other federal agencies will be asked to support the territories.

"Hawaii won, but the territories lost," said council chair Will Sword. "We appreciate the funding received from the Hawaii Longline Association over the past 10 years, but the funding gap needs to be filled immediately."

"The U.S. government had at least a dozen bilateral meetings with other delegations, yet they never reported specifics, nor were the Commissioners or delegates invited," said Sylvan Igisomar, council member and CNMI head of delegation.

The council will convey to NOAA the shortcomings of the United States Government to include the U.S. Participating Territories and other delegation members at WCPFC20.

Another funding source for MCP projects is fishing agreements with foreign countries. The Council will coordinate with the U.S. Pacific Territories, NMFS, and NOAA General Counsel to continue exploring the feasibility of using Pacific Insular Area Fishing Agreements.

American Samoa bottomfish catch limits

Regarding American Samoa bottomfish management unit species, the Council recommended discontinuing the rebuilding plan as a follow up to the stock assessment reviewed at the June 2023 council meeting that confirmed the fishery was not overfished or experiencing overfishing. Instead of an aggregate annual catch limit, the council specified single species ACLs from 2024-2026 for nine assessed species based on their respective risk of overfishing and management uncertainty.

ty analysis scores.

The council discussed that the current data collection and monitoring systems in American Samoa do not allow for real-time tracking of catches in a timely manner. Instead, the Council recommended a post-season accountability measure that if the average catch of the three most recent years exceeds the specified ACL in a fishing year, the ACL for the following fishing year will be reduced by the amount of the overage.

For more information on PI-AFAs, visit www.wpcouncil.org/international-fishing. **(PR)**

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

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RFP24-CHCC/WIC-003

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JAN. 05TH, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

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CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP24-CHCC/CGC-CORS 988 PROGRAM-004

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JAN. 5TH, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB24-CHCC/WIC-006

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 9, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"REPLACEMENT OF THE AIRCONDITIONING UNIT SYSTEM"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY



NMPASI

NORTHERN MARIANAS PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEMS, INC.

PO Box 503529, Saipan, MP 96950 Tel. Nos.: (670) 235-7273/4 - Fax: (670) 235-7275

Request for Proposal

The Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) is soliciting proposals for Audit of financial and compliance audit for fiscal year ending **September 30, 2023**. NMPASI is designated, federally funded protection and advocacy system for persons with disabilities in the CNMI. NMPASI uses a variety of individual and systems advocacy approaches to protect people's rights, including legal and administrative remedies, legislative, policy change and trainings. Proposals for the financial and compliance audit shall be submitted to NMPASI, P.O. Box 503529, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than January 19, 2024. The audit shall be performed in compliance with the following guidelines:

1. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards;
2. OMB Circular A-133; and
3. Compliance with the general Requirements Applicable to Federal Financial Assistance Program.

Award will be based on specific factor such as prior experience, technical competence, ability to meet the deadline and price in this order. The contract for this audit will be awarded no later than **December 30, 2023**, and a final audit report shall be completed by **March 15, 2024**. A list of specific audit requirements and Agency's profile are available at NMPASI office, Marianas Business Plaza, 5th floor Room 505. Any questions regarding this matter can be addressed to Mr. Gregory Borja, Executive Director at (670) 235-7273/4 (voice) or email at gborja@nmpasi.org.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

House Republicans' empty impeachment inquiry cheapens an important process

The move by House Republicans Wednesday to formally open an impeachment inquiry against President Joe Biden was perhaps predictable back in January 2021—with then-President Donald Trump's second impeachment, for his role in the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol—or even as far back as December 2019, with Trump's first impeachment, for trying to strong-arm Ukraine's government into helping him win reelection.

But that predictability doesn't make the GOP's Biden impeachment inquiry any less of a cynical, pathetic stunt. Though Wednesday's vote made the process official, House Republicans have already been thrashing around for a year trying to find something/anything on Biden that is remotely impeachable. There's nothing.

Yet they're formally moving ahead anyway, barely bothering to disguise that they are merely seeking payback for the two fully justified impeachments against Trump by launching a patently unjustified one against Biden.

If it wasn't inevitable before Wednesday's short-sighted House action, it probably is now: Every president in the foreseeable future who faces a House held by the opposing party will just automatically come under an impeachment inquiry, justified or not.

The crux of Republicans' allegations against Biden, such as they are, center on the various business schemes of his son Hunter Biden. The younger Biden is in fact a shady underachiever who has tried to leverage his last name for profit and who perhaps belongs in prison. He may be headed there; he is currently under indictment on federal tax and firearms charges.

The problem for House Republicans is that their attempts to prove President Biden was corruptly involved in his son's dealing have produced nothing.

No, Biden's pressure on Ukraine to fire a crooked prosecutor while he was vice president wasn't an attempt to protect his son from prosecution for his business dealings there. Biden was doing the bidding of the Obama administration and international organizations that wanted the prosecutor out because he wasn't doing his job.

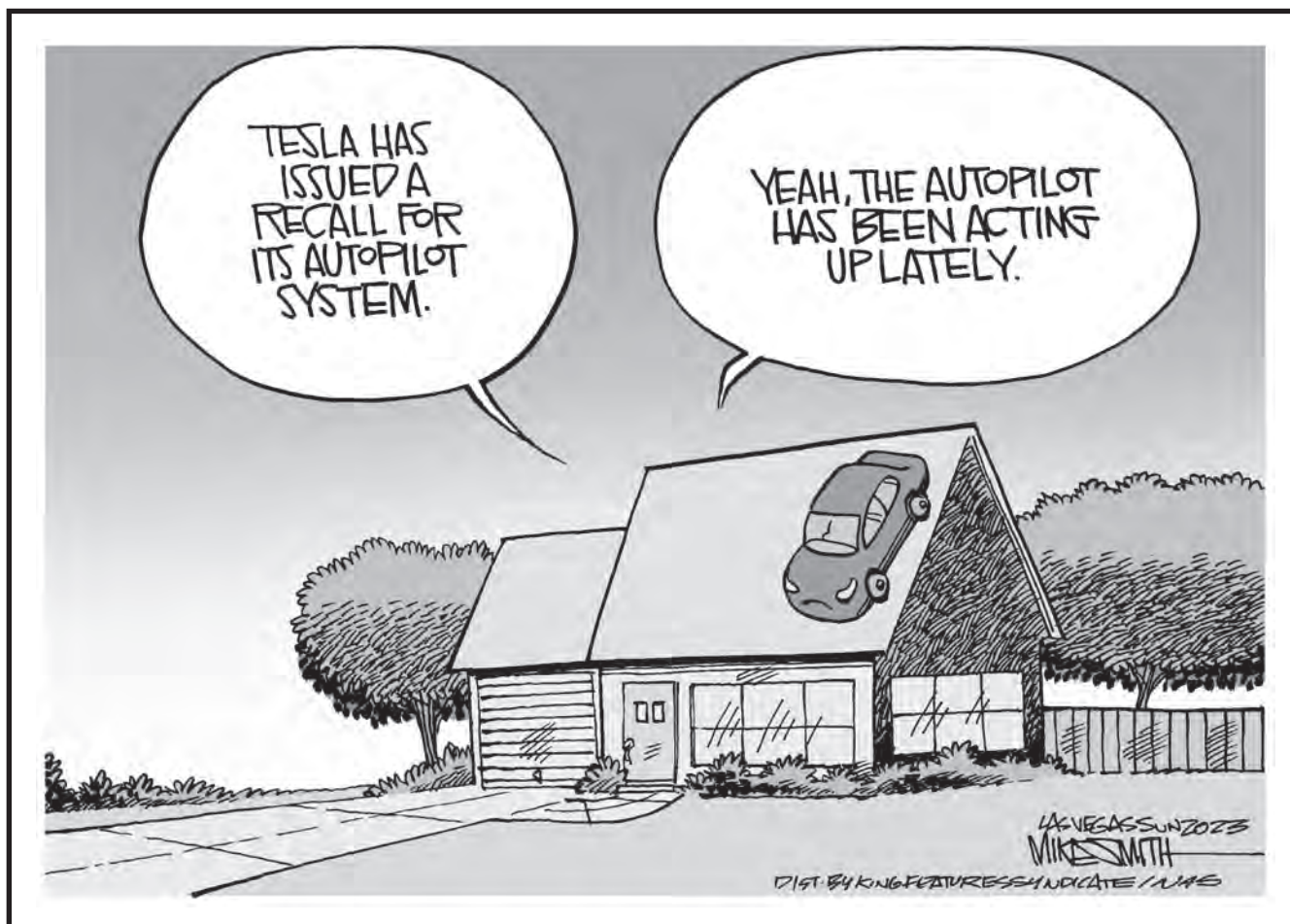
No, there's no evidence that Biden thumbed the scales at the Justice Department to protect his son from prosecution. Again, the younger Biden is currently facing felony charges.

No, the \$4,000 Hunter Biden paid to his father in 2018 wasn't evidence that Joe Biden (then a private citizen) was involved in his son's schemes; it was reimbursement for a car purchase that the younger Biden couldn't make himself because of his bad credit.

Even the Republicans spearheading the impeachment inquiry say the reason for making the inquiry formal on Wednesday isn't because they suddenly have evidence of impeachable conduct, but because it will make it easier to look for such evidence.

Remember during the 2010 debate over the Affordable Care Act, when then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi caused Republican heads everywhere to explode by declaring, "We

See HOUSE on Page 9



A Texas case shows how cruel and illusory the latest abortion-ban exceptions can be

A historic drama playing out in Texas ended Tuesday when the Texas Supreme Court held that Kate Cox, a woman 20 weeks pregnant with a fetus with trisomy 18, an almost always fatal abnormality, could not legally end her pregnancy in her home state.

Cox had taken the rare step of petitioning for a court-ordered abortion. She succeeded in the lower court, prompting Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton to appeal and threaten local hospitals and Cox's doctor with prosecution if she got the procedure. The Texas Supreme Court quickly handed down its ruling: State law did not make an exception for fatal fetal abnormalities and Cox was not near enough to death or permanent impairment of a major bodily function to qualify for an exemption. She traveled out of state to terminate her pregnancy.

Cox's loss in court illustrates the confusing, contentious state of abortion law since *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned *Roe vs. Wade* in 2022. (The Supreme Court's announcement Wednesday that it would take up challenges to medication abortion is another such indicator.) Abortion-ban exceptions are particularly fraught. Their complexities and the current antiabortion playbook add up to an extraordinary reality: Present-day abortion-ban exceptions will fail to protect patient health, no matter how Americans may interpret them or the intentions of the legislators who passed them.

When states began criminalizing abortion in the 19th century, almost every ban had an exception for the life of the patient. In the 1960s, legislators introduced additional exceptions: for sexual assault, incest, fetal disability and certain health risks.

Even then, exceptions proved to be contentious and unworkable. Early on, before the 1940s and 1950s, prosecutions were rare unless a patient died. In practice, that gave physicians discretion to determine when there was a real threat to patients' lives. But later, prosecutors began cracking down on a larger group of abortion providers. Hospitals and physicians responded by setting a high bar for legal abortion to shield themselves from criminal liability. Patients without money or connections had little luck, and it could be daunting, even traumatic, to try to convince physicians that a sexual assault had really occurred, or that a health threat was serious enough to qualify them for an exception.

The post-Roe generation of abortion-ban exceptions are even more gravely problematic. The legislators who passed "trigger bans" before *Dobbs*, or fresh bans afterward, have often authorized punishments for doctors—and others in women's support networks—that are much harsher than any that were common before 1973, including life in prison, the penalty in Texas for doctors.

Many of the new abortion statutes copy model language de-

By MARY ZIEGLER

Los Angeles Times

Mary Ziegler is a law professor at UC Davis and the author of *Roe: The History of a National Obsession*.



veloped by antiabortion groups anxious that any exception could become a loophole for abortion on demand. For example, an exception for sexual assault could invite women to "cry rape." Or if health dangers included risks to mental well-being, it could be too easy for women to get permission to legally terminate a pregnancy.

The new bans seek to eliminate discretion for physicians as well. Some, creating so-called affirmative defenses, require doctors to prove they are innocent rather than mandating that prosecutors establish their guilt.

As important, leading antiabortion figures oppose exceptions as a matter of principle. They embrace the idea that a fetus is a rights-holding person, and therefore no exception can be justified if the unborn child is by law treated like the rest of us. Even though—as Cox's case shows—Texas' ban makes an exception almost impossible, for Americans opposed to abortion, it represents compromise.

In other words, the goal of the new bans is primarily to protect fetal life. Exceptions appear in virtually every law, but their purpose is more to deter patients viewed as undeserving—unless you can prove your imminent demise, for example—not to safeguard women's health.

Cox's lawsuit is far from the only attempt to clarify or challenge abortion-ban exceptions. A plaintiff in Kentucky has filed a class action seeking permission for an abortion. Lawsuits in Texas, Tennessee and Idaho argue that if state exceptions cannot be more broadly interpreted, then the laws themselves are unconstitutional. In some states, courts have already weighed in on the constitutionality of specific exceptions, with more cases likely to follow.

The same message emerges from these cases, whether plaintiffs like Cox win or lose, and perhaps especially if they fail. The exceptions *Dobbs* brought into effect do not work the way many Americans might have guessed, and may be designed not to work for patients at all. When the state's interest in fetal life clashes with real health threats faced by women, patients will always find themselves on the losing side.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

COP28's climate success isn't nearly enough

As the 28th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference, known by its acronym COP28, wrapped up last week, diplomats and activists rejoiced. In a historic first, nearly 200 countries signed an agreement to “transition away from fossil fuels.”

A decade or two ago, this might have been reason to celebrate, but the impact climate change has already caused should have set off a five-alarm fire. Anything short of consensus on urgent action won't meet the moment.

We continue to compromise our climate change response at our peril. This was the hottest year on record, with deadly heat and humidity in parts of the United States and the Middle East and record ocean temperatures. Unprecedented wildfires shut people indoors thousands of miles away due to dangerous air pollution. Catastrophic storms and flooding hit Libya, India and the United States, while Chile and countries in the Horn of Africa saw their worst droughts in decades. All of this is causing trillions of dollars in economic costs and losses and massive human suffering.

It's easy to understand why COP28's agreement was welcome news though. This year's climate conference was fraught, and expectations low. After all, the host country, the United Arab Emirates, is one of the world's biggest oil and gas producers.

The conflict of interest was glaring. The chief executive of Abu Dhabi's state-owned oil company, Sultan al Jaber, who presided over the event, recently denied that phasing out fossil fuels was even necessary to combat climate change. Given the nefarious role that oil companies have long played in undermining this fight, it was hardly surprising. But putting someone like this at the helm of the climate-solution debate gave a platform and legitimacy to the nay-sayers, stacking the deck against progress.

This was more than just a case of greenwashing, where states and companies promote projects and events designed to burnish their environmental image. COP28 was an attempt at sabotage, where several big oil-producing states hoped to soften or slow any commitments to phasing out the fossil fuels that make them wealthy. Al Jaber also reportedly planned to use the conference as an opportunity to strike new oil and gas deals with foreign governments.

“Team science” was bracing for the worst then when an initial

draft agreement was circulated among the parties that explicitly cut any reference to phasing out fossil fuels, under pressure from Saudi Arabia and other wealthy oil-producing states.

Given this backdrop, the agreement reached was notable. Prior agreements failed to even reference fossil fuels specifically. This one calls on nations to cease adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere by midcentury and to triple renewable energy by 2030.

But those commitments are nonbinding and unenforceable, and the way that many important players were dragged to the table gives little confidence that they will fulfill these voluntary aims—on time or ever. This includes not just big oil producers but also countries such as India and China that are counting on fossil fuels to keep fueling their growth.

The blame for these shortcomings, however, can't be levied only upon the UAE and its petrostate cronies. The leading nations promoting climate change action aren't meeting the moment either. It's hard to shame others into sacrifice when the champions for action have also responded in contradictory ways.

The United States had its biggest legislative success yet with the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act last year, which provided an unprecedented investment in the clean energy transition. But the same administration that passed that signature law also presided over an expansion of oil and gas production and failed to end fossil fuel subsidies, hampering that transition by keeping fossil fuel prices artificially low. The country's dysfunctional politics makes it hard to have hope in its ability to lead the charge.

Europe faces similar obstacles. The war in Ukraine forced a reckoning with Europe's heavy reliance on Russia for energy. But rather than kick-starting a faster transition, countries like Germany turned back to burning coal.

We know what must be done. Whatever the oil industry and its purchased politicians want us to believe, the science is unassailable—burning fossil fuels is causing climate change. We even have the tools to rein it in, with technology for renewable energy sources improving every day.

But we're still getting even worse. We know a dramatic reduction and ultimate phaseout of fossil fuel emissions is critical, and yet this year saw a 1.1% increase in them. Existential

By ELIZABETH SHACKELFORD

Chicago Tribune

Elizabeth Shackelford is a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune. She was previously a U.S. diplomat and is the author of *The Dissent Channel: American Diplomacy in a Dishonest Age*.



imperatives are proving insufficient to overcome greed, short-term interests, and political pressure.

COP28 has proven once again that, while coordinating some kind of global consensus is necessary, it's far from sufficient. The United States can't wait for everyone to agree on that future. If we want a world that takes climate change seriously enough to prevent parts of the world becoming unlivable, mass migration and food insecurity driving global conflict, and the weather becoming our number one cause of death, we need to do more to lead.

Transitioning off fossil fuels won't be politically or economically easy. But from the preview we've already seen, the alternative will be much worse.

A CNMI Winter Solstice Sonnet

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



Winter will arrive in the CNMI this Friday on Dec. 22, 2023, at 1:27pm. No snow forecast.

The sun is coming up the sun is going down
listen to the sound of rain on banana trees
bright flowers are blooming all over town
enjoy that nice cooling trade wind breeze

After the sun has risen you see that it rose
on its shortest trip through our sky this year
still long enough to burn your face and nose
time for lemon in your tea a tear in your beer

After it sets it is still not yet time for bed
all those things you wanted to do in daylight
all those things maybe better left unsaid
but the tilting of the earth you cannot fight

As Winter solstice through heaven knocks
I can't wait for Spring and Vernal Equinox.

HOUSE

From page 8

have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it"? It's like that—except, instead of mere legislation, that twisted logic is being applied to the somber and potentially dangerous process of removing a sitting president.

Trump was impeached for endangering national security by trying to extort a global ally for political purposes, and then for his unprecedented betrayal of his office in attempting to overturn a valid election.

Biden, in glaring contrast, is facing this impeachment inquiry for no reason but that House Republicans have made a conscious decision to politicize and cheapen an urgent constitutional function to the point of making it meaningless.

Christmas is the world's festival, its happy place

I am an oddball. I like to work on Christmas.

I don't know how it is now, but when I was younger and worked for newspapers, variously in Africa, Britain and the United States, I always volunteered to work over the holiday and loved it. There was a special Christmas camaraderie, often more than a little nipping at the eggnog, and the joy to know that senior staff weren't around—and, especially, to know that they weren't needed. We, the juniors, could do it.

When you were unimportant otherwise, being in charge of a daily newspaper was the kind of Christmas gift one savored. It was a case of being news editor, city editor or chief correspondent for a day.

The senior editors were gone, and the junior staff had the run of the proceedings. Lovely fun, it was.

But not every worker is happy to labor on the great day. Consider the parish priest.

Once, I stayed with my wife, Linda Gasparello, at The Homestead, the grand hotel in Hot Springs, Virginia, where Washingtonians have been spending Christmas since the 1800s.

Having feasted happily but unwisely on Christmas dinner in the hotel's baronial dining room, we felt the need for a little drive and perhaps a walk. We fetched up at The Inn at Gristmill Square in Warm Springs. The town abuts the hotel's 2,300 acres and is a delightful contrast, small and cozy.

At the bar was the local Episcopal priest. He was enjoying a little bottled Christmas cheer. Together, we had some more of what had brought him to his relaxed state and, looking dolefully at me, he said, “I love my job. I love my parishioners. But Christmas is so hard on a parish priest, that is why I am here with my friend.” He indicated the bartender.

He explained that apart from the additional services, he was expected to call on many families, attend many parties, eat lunches and dinners, and visit the sick and attend the everyday pastoral work of his office. The poor father was exhausted and enjoying Christmas in his private way, far from the madding crowd.

Clearly, this was nothing like the lark of working on newspapers at Christmas. But we shared more cheer, and he told me of how the real Christmas for him was in his daily pastoral work.

By LLEWELLYN KING

Tribune News Service

Llewellyn King is the executive producer and host of *White House Chronicle* on PBS. He wrote this for *InsideSources.com*.



He also liked working on Christmas, just that his lasted all year and got a bit hectic toward the 25th of December.

I marvel at Christmas. How it grips the whole world. How transcendental it is. How it sweeps up denominations. How Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and animists get into the spirit of it.

Also, I marvel at how Christmas has been modified globally to fit the Northern European tradition, with snow and mistletoe and songs that often have no religious relationship—like “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” or “White Christmas.”

My mother—who, like me, grew up in Africa—was against what she saw as the cultural appropriation of Christmas by the snowy European influence. She insisted on covering the house in ferns and other greenery, which she cut and hung on the 24th of December. Not an hour earlier. The 12 days of Christmas began for her on Christmas Eve and extended to Twelfth Night. Decorating earlier was heresy.






In vain, I pleaded for cotton wool snow, even though there was no snow in Bethlehem, and told her there was no greenery in the desert.

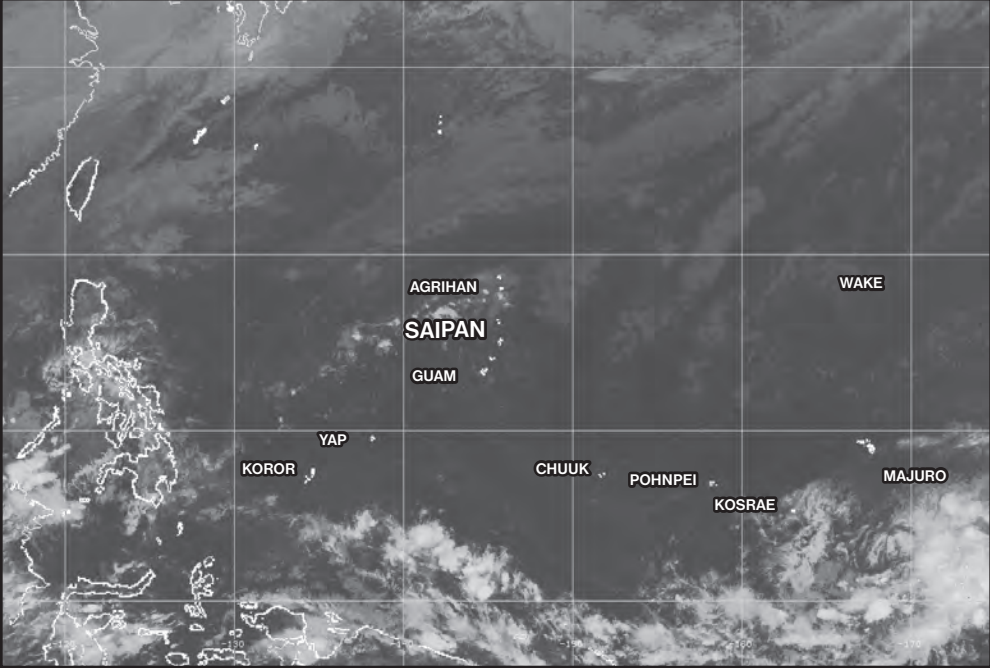
“Good King Wenceslas” was, it is believed, the Duke of Bohemia, now the Czech Republic. But to us in Africa, in the summer in the Southern Hemisphere, the snow lay deep and crisp and even in our imaginations.

That is the miracle of Christmas. It is for everyone, celebrated in its own way across the continents, inside and outside of Christendom.

Christmas is the world's happy place. Enjoy!

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
87	78°	87	78°	86	78°	86	77°	86	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 5:11 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

cloudy skies and isolated showers across the Marianas. Latest buoy and altimetry data showing seas of 7 to 9 feet. Winds are moderate to fresh.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Thursday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Friday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Saturday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Sunday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	12:05 AM	12:35 PM
Thursday	-	1:00 AM	1:14 PM
Friday	-	1:54 AM	1:55 PM
Saturday	-	2:50 AM	2:37 PM
Sunday	-	3:47 AM	3:23 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	79° / 66°	
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 21°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	64° / 61°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	78° / 65°	
London	Showers	54° / 45°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	65° / 42°	
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 77°	
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	82° / 55°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 68°	
New York	Partly Cloudy	45° / 30°	
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 37°	
Paris	Cloudy	50° / 45°	
Busan	Sunny	48° / 32°	
Rome	Sunny	50° / 34°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	62° / 51°	
San Francisco	Sunny	57° / 42°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	43° / 30°	
Tokyo	Sunny	52° / 34°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	45° / 33°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
12:27 AM	High Tide	1.31	
7:18 AM	Low Tide	0.07	
2:20 PM	High Tide	1.80	
9:08 PM	Low Tide	0.56	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 20, 2023

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4, 7	OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Bolis R Us II moves to Garapan

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Bolis R Us II is taking its talents to northern Beach Road or to Garapan to be more precise, just beside TSL Plaza.

Owner Tracy Pangelinan said the traditional Chamorro snack bar always had its sights to opening a branch in central Saipan.

“Our plan from the beginning was to open a branch in Garapan. We were unable to find the right location. Our previous location was only able to accommodate up to six persons. Our new location with seating can occupy up to 27.”

Like its previous iterations in Oleai, the bigger and better Bolis R Us II in Garapan offers a variety of local food like their signature empanadas as well as American and Filipino dishes and sweets.

“Our all-time favorite best-sellers are our empanadas. We will be announcing the comeback of our ‘Sushi Express in the Village’ soon,” she said.

To mark the opening of the Garapan site, Pangelinan said they will be having a promotion where their daily lunch can be had for only \$5 for one viand choice, \$6 for two choices, and \$9 for three choices—all inclusive of two scoops of rice, finadeni, and koko.

Pangelinan said in a way the move to Garapan is a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Bolis R Us II has relocated to northern Garapan along Beach Road just beside TSL Plaza.

vote of confidence in the CNMI economy, as she is optimistic that sales will increase with the islands completely saying goodbye to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Not to say the economy will not change. We must stay in the positive mindset and say our economy will get better. With COVID lifted we can project more tourist coming in to boost our economy.”

She is also happy to provide jobs especially at a time when

other businesses have reduced their hours to stay in business.

“We did not have a problem looking for new staff. On our first job opening announcement I had about 70 applicants. Most of the applicants that applied were looking for a second job.”

As the offspring of Terry's Snack Bar, Bolis R Us II continues the long tradition of delicious local comfort food.

“I encourage my local customers to come taste our comfort food. You won't re-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
To mark the opening of the Garapan site, Bolis R Us II's daily lunch can be had for only \$5 for one viand choice, \$6 for two choices, and \$9 for three choices—all inclusive of two scoops of rice, finadeni, and koko.

gret it. We've been around for so many years. This lets us know that we're doing a great job. My mom's Terry's Snack Bar is still located at the same place in Chalan Kanoa across from William S. Reyes Elementary School.”

Pangelinan also announced that Terry's n Bolis in Kagman

has closed after her niece, Loli Pangelinan, moved to Texas and opened Bolis Grub there.

“So, basically anywhere you go you can enjoy our delicious food on Saipan and the U.S. mainland,” she said.

Bolis R Us II is open Monday-Saturday from 6:30am to 2pm. For more information, call (670) 284-7170 and (670) 284-6474. They can also be reached on Facebook.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Bolis R Us II's new location can accommodate up to 27 dine-in customers.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Bolis R Us II offers a variety of local food like their signature empanadas as well as American and Filipino dishes and sweets.

Storied US Steel to be acquired for more than \$14B by Nippon Steel

U.S. Steel, the Pittsburgh steel producer that played a key role in the nation's industrialization, is being acquired by Nippon Steel in an all-cash deal valued at approximately \$14.1 billion.

The transaction is worth about \$14.9 billion when including the assumption of debt. The combined company will be among the top three steel-producing companies in the world, according to 2022 figures from the World Steel Association.

The price tag for U.S. Steel is nearly double what was offered just four months ago by rival Cleveland Cliffs. U.S. Steel, which rejected that offer, confirmed the offering price from Nippon early Monday.

That tie-up would have created one of the top four outside of China, which dominates global steel production. U.S. Steel executives were asked about a potential pushback from U.S. regulators over security concerns on Monday.

“This is going to increase competition here in the United States with a great ally to the United States,” answered U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt. “It's a great fit and we do not see

that as a high level risk factor. We'd say low level of risk.”

U.S. Steel will keep its name and its headquarters in Pittsburgh, where it was founded in 1901 by J.P. Morgan, Andrew Carnegie. It will become a subsidiary of Nippon.

China and Chinese companies have come to dominate global steel production. Of the nearly 2 billion metric tons of steel produced annually across the globe, about 54% comes from China, according to the World Steel Association.

China's Baowu Group, a state-owned iron company based in Shanghai, churned out nearly 120 million metric tons of steel in 2021. The combined Nippon and U.S. Steel companies will produce less than 90 million metric tons of steel combined, with most of that coming from Nippon.

In 2022, U.S. Steel produced about 14.5 million tons.

The U.S. currently ranks No. 4 behind China, India and Japan, and the blast furnace steel plants operated by U.S. Steel are among the more costly to operate, compared with more modern facilities that melt down scrap using arc furnaces.

But U.S. Steel plants with blast furnaces remain integral to U.S. manufacturing, particularly automakers.

Earlier this year U.S. Steel idled one of its blast furnaces in Granite City, Illinois, in anticipation of a lower demand for steel, citing a strike against the big three automakers in Detroit.

Soaring prices have fueled consolidation in the steel industry this decade. Steel prices more than quadrupled near the start of the pandemic to near \$2,000 per metric ton by the summer of 2021 as supply chains experienced gridlock, a symptom of surging demand for goods and the lack of anticipation of that demand.

Nippon, which will pay \$55 per share for U.S. Steel, said Monday that the deal will bolster its manufacturing and technology capabilities. It will also expand Nippon's production in the U.S. and add to its positions in Japan, India and the ASEAN region.

Nippon said the acquisition is anticipated to bring its total annual crude steel capacity to 86 million tons and help it capitalize on growing demand for high-grade steel, automo-

tive and electrical steel.

“The transaction builds on our presence in the United States and we are committed to honoring all of U. S. Steel's existing union contracts,” Nippon President Eiji Hashimoto said in a prepared statement.

U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt said that the sale is beneficial to the United States, “ensuring a competitive, domestic steel industry, while strengthening our presence globally.” The company will continue to run its mining and steel operations in the U.S. for its domestic customers, he said during a conference call Monday.

Nippon said Monday that it will honor all collective bargaining agreements in place with the United Steelworkers and other employees, and is committed to maintaining its relationship with workers. Nippon has had a presence in the U.S. for almost 40 years, starting with a joint venture with Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel in 1984 that later became a wholly owned subsidiary.

The United Steelworkers International, however, pushed back immediately against the deal. (AP)

Apple to stop some watch sales in US

CUPERTINO, Calif.

(AP)—If two of the latest Apple Watches are on your holiday shopping list, don't dawdle for much longer because the devices won't be available to buy in the U.S. later this week if the White House doesn't intervene in an international patent dispute.

Apple plans to suspend sales of the Series 9 and Ultra 2 versions of its popular watch for online U.S. customers beginning Thursday afternoon and in its stores on Sunday. The move stems from an October decision by the International Trade Commission restricting Apple's watches with the Blood Oxygen measurement feature as part of an intellectual property dispute with medical technology company Masimo.

The White House had 60 days to review the ITC order issued on Oct. 26, meaning Apple could have kept selling the two affected models in the U.S. through Christmas. But the Cupertino, California, company said in a Monday statement that it is pausing sales early to ensure it complies with the ITC order.

If the ITC's sales ban isn't overturned, Apple pledged to “take all measures” to resume sales of the Series 9 and Ultra 2 models in the U.S. as soon as possible.

The Apple Watch SE, which lacks the Blood Oxygen feature, will remain on sale in the U.S. after Christmas Eve. Previously purchased Apple Watches equipped with the Blood Oxygen aren't affected by the ITC order.

Nation

Texas OK's law that lets police arrest migrants who enter US illegally

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP)—Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on Monday approved sweeping new powers that allow police to arrest migrants who illegally cross the U.S. border and give local judges authority to order them to leave the country, testing the limits of how far a state can go to enforce immigration laws.

Opponents have called the measure the most dramatic attempt by a state to police immigration since a 2010 Arizona law—denounced by critics as the “Show Me Your Papers” bill—that was largely struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court. Immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility, and Texas’ law is also likely to face swift legal challenges.

The law, which takes effect in March, allows any Texas law enforcement officer to arrest people who are suspected of entering the country illegally. Once in custody, they could either agree to a Texas judge’s order to leave the U.S. or be prosecuted on misdemeanor charges of illegal entry. Migrants who don’t leave could face arrest again under more serious felony charges.

Abbott, who signed the law in front of a section of border fence in Brownsville, predicted the number of people crossing illegally into Texas would drop by “well over 50%, maybe 75%.” He did not offer evidence for that estimate.

“The consequences of it are so extreme that the people being smuggled by the cartels, they will not want to be coming into the state of Texas,” he said.

The law adds another tension point over immigration



Gov. Greg Abbott signs three bills into law at a border wall construction site in Brownsville, Texas on Monday, Dec. 18, 2023, that will broaden his border security plans and add funding for more infrastructure to deter illegal immigration

amid a struggle between the White House and Senate negotiators to reach a deal on border security. Republicans in Congress are demanding changes to the immigration system in exchange for any help for Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs.

Texas Republicans have increasingly challenged the U.S. government’s authority over immigration, saying President Joe Biden’s administration isn’t doing enough to control the 1,950-mile (3,149-kilometer) southern border. Texas has bused more than 65,000 migrants to cities across America since August 2022 and recently installed razor wire along the banks of the Rio Grande, which has snagged and injured

some asylum-seekers.

The U.S. government on Monday temporarily shut down two railroad border crossings in Texas, a move that rail operators said would hamper trade ahead of Christmas. Troy Miller, U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s acting commissioner, said the closures at Eagle Pass and El Paso were a response to more migrants traveling on freight trains, particularly over the last week.

Miller said authorities are seeing “unprecedented” arrivals at the border, topping 10,000 crossings on some days this month.

Shortly after Abbott signed the new law, the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas said

it would challenge the measure in court. More than 20 congressional Democrats also signed a letter urging the U.S. Justice Department to sue to stop the law, known as Senate Bill 4.

“SB 4 is dangerous for the people of Texas and interferes with the federal government’s exclusive authority over immigration and foreign affairs,” the letter read.

Mexico’s government also has rebuked the measure. Under bilateral and international agreements, Mexico is required to accept deportations of its own citizens, but not those of other countries. Under the Texas law, migrants ordered to leave would be sent to ports of entry along the border with Mexico, even if they

are not Mexican citizens. In September and October, Venezuelans were the largest nationality arrested for illegally crossing the U.S. border.

During debate in the Texas House in November, GOP

state Rep. David Spiller pushed back against concerns that the law would be used as a dragnet to arrest immigrants statewide. He said enforcement would mostly take place in border counties. But he also rebuffed several efforts by Democrats to narrow the law, including a proposed carve-out for police on college campuses.

Because the illegal entry charge is a misdemeanor, which has a statute of limitation of two years, Spiller has said the law will not be used to target immigrants who have long been settled in the U.S.

“This is not, ‘Round up everyone who is here illegally and ship them back to Mexico,’” he said during debate over the bill.

Opponents have accused Texas Republicans of using the law as a vehicle to force the Supreme Court’s new conservative majority to revisit its landmark 2012 Arizona decision. At the time, Justice Anthony Kennedy said Arizona may have “understandable frustrations” with immigrants who are in the country illegally but that it can’t pursue policies that “undermine federal law.”

2022 federal elections not tainted by foreign interference, officials say

WASHINGTON (AP)—Foreign hackers did not change vote totals or otherwise compromise the integrity of federal elections last year in the United States, according to a declassified U.S. government report made public Monday.

The report does identify multiple instances in which hackers linked to Iran, China and Russia connected to election infrastructure, scanned state government websites and copied voter information. But it says there is no evidence that any of the cyber activity had any impact on the election or on the vote totals.

“We have no evidence that any detected activity prevented voting, changed votes, or disrupted the ability to tally votes or to transmit election results in a timely manner; altered any technical aspect of the voting process; or otherwise compromised the integrity of voter registration information or any ballots cast during 2022 federal elections,” the report says.

The report, a joint document prepared by the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security, represents a declassified overview of the U.S. government’s assessment of election security last year. It evaluated the impact of foreign government

activity on election infrastructure but did not examine efforts by foreign governments to shape public perception or sway voters’ opinions.

A separate report issued Monday by the office of the Director of National Intelligence examined foreign influence campaigns by multiple countries during the midterm elections.

The report assessed, for instance, that Russia tried to denigrate the Democratic Party, with a goal of weakening U.S. support for Ukraine, and undermine confidence in the elections. It said China sought to influence a handful of races featuring candidates from both major political parties, focusing on those with anti-China views and covertly denigrating a U.S. senator. And it said that Iran conducted covert operations aimed at exploiting perceived social divisions.

Interference by foreign governments has been central to American discourse in the last several elections, particularly after Russian operatives in 2016 hacked Democratic emails and facilitated their public release in what U.S. officials have said was an effort to benefit Republican candidate Donald Trump over his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton.

Deadly storm batters Northeastern US, knocking out power, grounding flights, and flooding roads

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—A storm barreled into the Northeastern U.S. on Monday, flooding roads and downing trees, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands, forcing flight cancellations and school closures, and killing at least four people.

More than 5 inches (13 centimeters) of rain fell in parts of New Jersey and northeastern Pennsylvania by mid-morning, and parts of several other states got more than 4 inches (10 centimeters), according to the National Weather Service. Wind gusts reached nearly 70 mph (113 kph) along the southern New England shoreline.

Power was knocked out for hundreds of thousands of customers in an area stretching north from Virginia through

New England, including nearly 423,000 in Maine and about 200,000 in Massachusetts as of Monday night, according to poweroutage.us.

The weather service issued flood and flash-flood warnings for New York City and the surrounding area, parts of Pennsylvania, upstate New York, western Connecticut, western Massachusetts and parts of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

An 89-year-old Hingham, Massachusetts, man was killed early Monday when high winds caused a tree to fall on a trailer, authorities said. In Windham, Maine, police said part of a tree fell and killed a man who was removing debris from his roof.

In Catskill, New York, a driver was killed after the ve-

hicle went around a barricade on a flooded road and was swept into the Catskill Creek, the Times Union reported. A man was pronounced dead in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, after he was found in a submerged vehicle Monday morning.

On Sunday in South Carolina, one person died when their vehicle flooded on a road in a gated community in Mount Pleasant.

Five months after flooding inundated Vermont’s capital city of Montpelier, water entered the basements of some downtown businesses as the city monitored the level of the Winooski River, officials said. Authorities in the village of Moretown, Vermont, urged residents to evacuate

some 30 to 50 homes because of flooding.

However, the city announced Monday night that the river was receding and forecasts predict the rain will taper off overnight.

“Several businesses needed to pump water from basements but damage was minimal due to many basements being empty as a precaution following the July flood,” the city’s statement said.

Three people were rescued from a home in Jamaica and another in Waterbury when that person’s vehicle was swept away by floodwaters, said Vermont Public Safety Commissioner Jennifer Morrison at a press conference with the governor. A shelter was set up in Barre and Morrison urged people to stay off the roads Monday night and not drive through floodwaters as the rivers are expected to rise.

Asia

N. Korea threatens 'more offensive actions' vs. US

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened “more offensive actions” to repel what he called increasing U.S.-led military threats after he supervised the third test of his country’s most advanced missile designed to strike the mainland U.S., state media reported Tuesday.

Kim’s statement suggests he is confident in his growing missile arsenal and will likely continue weapons testing activities ahead of next year’s presidential election in the United States. But many observers say North Korea still needs to perform more significant tests to prove it has functioning missiles targeting the U.S. mainland.

After watching Monday’s launch of the Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile, Kim said the test showed how North Korea could respond if the United States were to make “a wrong decision against it,” according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

Kim stressed the need to “never overlook all the reckless and irresponsible military threats of the enemies ... and to strongly counter them with more offensive actions,” KCNA said.

The Hwasong-18 ICBM is a developmental, solid-fueled ICBM that is considered North Korea’s most powerful weapon. Its built-in solid propellant makes launches harder for outsiders to detect than liquid-fueled missiles, which must be fueled before liftoffs.

But many foreign experts say North Korea still has some other technological hurdles to master to acquire reliable nuclear-tipped ICBMs, such as one to protect warheads from the harsh conditions of atmospheric reentry.

KCNA said the Hwasong-18 missile, launched on a high angle to avoid neighboring countries, flew a distance of 1,002 kilometers (622 miles) for 73.5 minutes at a maximum altitude of 6,518 kilometers (4,050 miles) before landing in an area off the North’s east coast. It said Kim expressed “great satisfaction” with the launch, which verified again the reliability of “the most powerful strategic core striking means” of North Korea.

It was the North’s third test of the Hwasong-18 missile. Its two previous launches occurred in April and July.

“Based on their statement, this looks to have been an exercise in signaling and a developmental test in one,” said Ankit Panda, an expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “There’s nothing new here technically as far as I can tell at this early stage, but they’re certainly growing increasingly confident in their

new solid propellant ICBM.”

Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said the North’s latest ICBM test is yet another indicator of how far its missile engine technology has progressed, but added there are limits to what North Korea can learn from lofted trajectory firings.

“Demonstrating warhead targeting and reentry capabilities would involve provocative launches across greater distances,” Easley said. “So more significant tests of both technology and diplomacy are likely in the New Year.”

KCNA said its Hwasong-18 test was meant to issue a warning over its rivals’ confrontational military moves on North Korea. It said a recent U.S.-South Korean meeting to discuss their nuclear deterrence plan openly revealed their intention to hold joint drills with a simulated nuclear attack on North Korea.

It also referred to the second Nuclear Consultative Group meeting between senior U.S. and South Korean officials last Friday. During their meeting in Washington, the two countries agreed to update their nuclear deterrence and contingency strategies and incorporate nuclear operation scenarios in their combined military exercises next summer, according to officials in Seoul.

US Indo-Pacific commander ‘very concerned’ about escalation of China-Russia military ties

TOKYO (AP)—The head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Monday he is “very concerned” about increased joint military actions by China and Russia in the region.

Adm. John C. Aquilino spoke in Tokyo as another regional concern, North Korea, conducted its latest intercontinental ballistic missile test, underscoring the advancement of its capabilities.

Aquilino is meeting with Japanese defense officials ahead of a joint exercise, Keen Edge 24, early next year.

He urged China to stop escalating maritime confrontations with its neighbors, and said its increasing military activity with Russia is a serious concern during Moscow’s war in Ukraine.

“I view it as far beyond the marriage of convenience at this point in time” he said. “If you tied DPRK (North Korea) into that, the Russia-DPRK cooperation, and the fact that the only partner of the DPRK prior

to that was (China), that’s just a bad neighborhood and bad group to be in,” Aquilino said.

North Korea has been pushing to expand cooperation with Russia and China. There have been concerns that the North has supplied missiles and other ammunition to Russia to support its war in Ukraine, in exchange for obtaining Russian missile technology.

Chinese and Russian bombers had a joint flight last week over the East China Sea to the waters between Japan and the Korean Peninsula, causing Japanese fighter jets to scramble against them, according to Japan’s Defense Ministry.

Japan has territorial disputes with China over the Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands which Beijing also claims. It considers China a threat to national security and is in the process of a rapid military buildup.

Japan is particularly concerned about China’s increased joint activity with Russia’s military around the Japanese coast.

China has growing tensions with other neighbors.

Standoffs between China and the Philippines over a number of disputed offshore areas in the South China Sea have escalated this year. The United States has warned China that it is obligated to defend the Philippines, its treaty ally, if Filipino forces come under attack. China has warned the U.S. to stay away from what it calls a purely Asian dispute.

China also activated sonar in waters where an Australian ship had divers working.

But China’s flight and maritime close encounters with U.S. warplanes and ships have stopped since U.S. President Joe Biden and China’s Xi Jinping agreed in November to stabilize their relationship and re-establish military communication.

But Aquilino’s requested talks with his Chinese counterpart have been pending for three years, and he is waiting for China to respond to his renewed request.

World

Security Council delays vote on Gaza ceasefire resolution



Palestinians search for bodies and survivors in the rubble of a residential building destroyed in an Israeli airstrike, in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, Friday, Dec. 15, 2023

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. Security Council delayed until Tuesday morning a vote on an Arab-sponsored resolution calling for a halt to hostilities in Gaza to allow for urgently needed aid deliveries to a massive number of civilians as members intensified negotiations to try to avoid another veto by the United States.

The council said Monday’s 5 p.m. EST vote would not take place, and diplomats said negotiations were taking place to get the United States, Israel’s closest ally, to abstain or vote “yes” on the resolution.

A key issue is how to implement and sustain a desperately needed aid operation. Human Rights Watch accused Israel earlier Monday of deliberately starving Gaza’s population by blocking the delivery of water, food and fuel, a method of warfare that it described as a war crime. The United Na-

tions’ food agency reported on Dec. 14 that 56% of Gaza’s households were experiencing “severe levels of hunger,” up from 38% two weeks earlier.

The draft on the table Monday morning called for an “urgent and sustainable cessation of hostilities” for humanitarian access to deliver aid. But this language is expected to be watered down to a “suspension” of hostilities or something possibly weaker to satisfy the Americans, the diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because discussions have been private.

The U.S. vetoed a Security Council resolution on Dec. 8 that was backed by almost all council members and dozens of other nations demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza. The 193-member General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a similar resolution on

Dec. 12 by a vote of 153-10, with 23 abstentions.

The importance of a Security Council resolution is that it is legally binding, but in practice many parties choose to ignore the council’s requests for action. General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, but though they are a significant barometer of world opinion.

The draft resolution that was being considered by the 15 council members on Monday recognizes that civilians in Gaza don’t have access to sufficient food, water, sanitation, electricity, telecommunications and medical services “essential for their survival.” Also, it would express the council’s “strong concern for the disproportionate effect that the conflict is having on the lives and well-being of children, women and other civilians in vulnerable situations.”

Russia, Ukraine launch numerous drone attacks targeting Russian air base and Black Sea coast

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russia and Ukraine reportedly launched mass drone attacks at each other’s territories for a second straight day Sunday, one of which apparently targeted a Russian military airport.

At least 35 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight over three regions in southwestern Russia, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a post on the messaging app Telegram.

A Russian air base hosting bomber aircraft used in the war in Ukraine was among the targets, according to a Russian Telegram channel critical of the Kremlin. The channel

posted short videos of drones flying over low-rise housing in what it said was the Russian town of Morozovsk, whose air base is home to Russia’s 559th Bomber Aviation Regiment.

Vasily Golubev, the governor of Russia’s Rostov province, separately reported “mass drone strikes” near Morozovsk and another town farther west, but didn’t mention the air base. Golubev said most the drones were shot down and there were no casualties. He didn’t comment on damage.

As of Sunday evening, Kyiv didn’t formally acknowledge or claim responsibility for the drone attacks.

A major Ukrainian newspaper, Ukrainska Pravda, cited an anonymous source in the security services as saying that Ukraine’s army and intelligence services successfully struck the Morozovsk air base, inflicting “significant damage” to military equipment. It wasn’t immediately possible to verify this claim.

Also Sunday morning, Ukraine’s air force said it shot down 20 Iranian-made Shahed drones launched overnight by Russian troops in southern and western Ukraine, as well as one X-59 cruise missile launched from the country’s occupied south.

Good Housekeeping



Pure white and natural wood elements help to create a soothing sense of calm.



White with hints of nature helps to create a soothing place for the eye to rest in this space.



This bathroom is enhanced through the use of design elements including wood and greenery to add a sense of calm.

Fostering work-life balance when working from home

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

As the dynamics relating to how home and work converge, many people may be asking how to separate the two. In essence, how to avoid having one's home feel like "the office" while still creating an environment that feels like home. For many, there needs to be a life, work balance.

Here are some recommendations for creating an ideal blend of work and relaxation under the same roof.

1 Create a separate area for work. Ideally this should be a separate room, but if you can't, creating

a work "zone" that is separate and distinct will help.

2 Take frequent breaks during the day. Once in the morning, around lunch and before the end of the day is ideal.

3 Spend some time outdoors. Taking time for a breath of fresh air will help instill a sense of calm.

4 Infuse soothing colors to create a sense of calm. Pure white, neutrals and soothing blues can help.

5 Incorporate greenery. Trees and plants can go a long way in helping a space feel modern, fresh and calm.

6 Try to incorporate nature and natural elements.

7 When possible utilize natural sunlight or infuse as much light as possible into a space. Sunlight can help to calm the mind.

8 Consider incorporating scent or fragrance. A calming effect can come from "soothing the senses."

9 Experiment with mirrors. Mirrors help to reflect light and can act like windows in a space.

10 Use wood and wood-like elements. This can help to "ground" a space and help to make it feel cozy.



Using light colors in a bathroom helps to create a "spa like" feel.



Greenery helps to instill a sense of calm in this bedroom space.



A simple desk and chair creates a functional place to work in this home.



A separate office area is created in a windowless space.

Life & Style

'Wonka' waltzes to \$39 million opening, propelled by Chalamet's starring role

NEW YORK (AP)—"Wonka" debuted with \$39 million in box office sales in U.S. and Canadian theaters over the weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday. That made it a strong start for the Timothée Chalamet-starring Willy Wonka musical that underscored the young star's draw.

Musicals have been tough sells in theaters in recent years, so much so that Warner Bros. downplayed the song and dance elements of "Wonka" in trailers. Instead, the studio emphasized Chalamet, the 27-year-old actor who, with "Wonka," notched his second No. 1 movie following 2021's

"Dune." The earlier film recorded a \$41 million opening.

While "Dune" was a sprawling and star-studded sci-fi adventure, "Wonka" relies chiefly on Chalamet's charisma.

"Wonka," which cost about \$125 million to produce and played at 4,203 locations, was also the first big Hollywood release to launch following the end of the SAG-AFTRA actors' strike. Chalamet hosted "Saturday Night Live" just days after the strike ended. In his opening monologue, he sang to the tune of "Pure Imagination" about "returning to this magical world where actors can promote their projects."

"It shows you the power of a star, and it also shows you the power of a star going out and working a movie," said Jeffrey Goldstein, distribution chief for Warner Bros. "Having him out there after the strikes were over was a win for him and a win for the movie."

Goldstein expects "Wonka" to be the go-to choice from families over the holidays. Its main competition for kids will be Universal Pictures' animated "Migration."

"Wonka," directed by Paul King of "Paddington" and "Paddington 2," is a prequel to 1971's "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory," with

Chalamet starring as a young Wonka trying to open a candy store. Its ensemble cast includes Hugh Grant, Olivia Colman and Keegan-Michael Key.

Warner Bros. last revived Roald Dahl's classic with the 2005 Tim Burton-directed "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," starring Johnny Depp. It debuted with \$56.2 million and ultimately grossed \$475 million worldwide.

To reach those numbers, "Wonka" will need strong legs through the lucrative holiday moviegoing period. On its side are mostly good reviews (84% "fresh" on Rotten Tomatoes) and positive audience reaction

- "Wonka," \$39 million.
- "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," \$5.8 million.
- "The Boy and the Heron," \$5.2 million.
- "Godzilla Minus One," \$4.9 million.
- "Trolls Band Together," \$4 million.
- "Wish," \$3.2 million.
- "Christmas With the Chosen: Holy Night," \$2.9 million.
- "Napoleon," \$2.2 million.
- "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," \$2 million.
- "Poor Things," \$1.3 million.

Marvel, Disney drop actor Jonathan Majors after he's convicted of assaulting his former girlfriend

NEW YORK (AP)—Jonathan Majors was convicted Monday of assaulting his former girlfriend after a trial that he hoped would vindicate him and restore his status as an emerging Hollywood star. It did just the opposite: Marvel Studios and the Walt Disney Co. dropped him hours after the verdict.



Majors

showed no immediate reaction as the verdict was read. He declined to comment as he left the courthouse.

His lawyer, Priya Chaudhry, said in a statement that he "still has faith in the process and looks forward to fully clearing his name."

While he was convicted of an assault charge that involves recklessly causing injury, she said his team was grateful for his acquittal on the other assault count, which concerned intentionally causing injury.

"Mr. Majors is grateful to God, his family, his friends and his fans for their love and support during these harrowing eight months," Chaudhry said.

Marvel and Disney immediately dropped the "Creed III" star from all upcoming projects following the conviction, said a

person close to the studio who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Before his arrest, Majors had been on track to become a central figure throughout the Marvel Cinematic Universe, playing the antagonist role of Kang. Majors had already appeared in "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" and the first two seasons of "Loki." He was to star in "Avengers: The Kang Dynasty," dated for release in May 2026.

Majors, whose credits include "The Last Black Man in San Francisco," "Devotion" and "Da 5 Bloods," had been one of the fastest-rising stars in Hollywood. The Yale School of Drama graduate also starred as a troubled amateur bodybuilder in "Magazine Dreams," which made an acclaimed debut at the Sundance Film Festival in

January and was set to open in theaters this month. Ahead of Majors' trial, Disney-owned distributor Searchlight Pictures removed "Magazine Dreams" from its release calendar.

Majors' sentencing was set for Feb. 6. He faces the possibility of up to a year in jail for the assault conviction, though probation or other non-jail sentences also are possible.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said in a statement that the trial "illustrated a cycle of psychological and emotional abuse, and escalating patterns of coercion."

The dispute between Majors and Jabbari began in the backseat of a chauffeured car and spilled into the streets of Manhattan.

Jabbari, a 30-year-old British dancer, accused Majors of hitting her in the head with his open hand, twisting her arm behind her back and squeezing her middle finger until it fractured.

Air Jordans made for Spike Lee and donated to Oregon shelter auctioned for nearly \$51K

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Watching a countdown of the auction's final minutes on Monday, Erin Holcomb couldn't believe it: the sale price kept jumping for the rare, gold Nike Air Jordan 3s that were anonymously dropped in the donation chute of the Oregon shelter where she works in Portland.

"In the last five minutes it went up and up, and every time we saw that number increase, there were tears and people clapping," Holcomb, director of staff ministries at the Portland Rescue Mission, told The Associated Press.

The sneakers, one of just a few custom pairs that had been made for filmmaker Spike Lee, ultimately sold for \$50,800—more than double the high end of the predicted sale price. All proceeds will benefit the Portland Rescue Mission, which has served people struggling

with homelessness, hunger and addiction since 1949.

"We couldn't believe it," Holcomb said. "The generosity of this moment has been a huge celebration for our whole organization."

Some two dozen people, mostly staff, gathered Monday morning to watch the auction live on a big screen TV in one of the shelter's conference rooms, Holcomb said. Among them was James Free, a formerly homeless man who found the shoes while sorting through donations and brought them to the attention of the staff. Free has lived at the mission for the past few months as part of its long-term shelter program, Holcomb said.

"I'm just so happy to be a part of this," Free said in a news release shared by the shelter after the auction closed. "I love this place, and I'm so glad to see this story shared."

Woman doesn't like the vibe she senses from her husband

DEAR ABBY: My husband is desperate for women's attention, and I'm sure he'd cheat on me the instant he had the chance. We have been together for 12 years. When we met, he was 24 and I was 31. I realize now that while I have had four long-term relationships and a fair share of sexual partners, my husband has had little sexual experience outside of our relationship.

Any time he's around women, whether I am there or not, he makes it a point to strike up a conversation or gain their attention. It doesn't matter if they're young or old, attractive or not. He has fostered many "friendships" with women I don't know, like gas station attendants or his employer's office staff.

He swears he has never cheated, and I have never found any solid proof other than pornography. I just can't shake this feeling that he needs or wants to experience other women, and I don't know what to do. Please help.

MORE EXPERIENCED IN SOUTH DAKOTA

DEAR MORE EXPERIENCED: If you haven't talked with your husband about this, do it now. Your husband may not be a wannabe philanderer as much as a plain old-fashioned flirt. People of both sexes need validation, particularly if their self-esteem isn't the highest. You won't know what's really driving him unless you can discuss it. If necessary, a marriage and family therapist may be able to help

the two of you communicate on a non-threatening level.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: When I met my boyfriend, it felt perfect. I thought I had found my soul mate. When I met his family, we got along well and spent more and more time together. I was 28; he was 31. We lived an hour away from his parents, and even though we were there every weekend and sometimes twice a week, his mom began complaining that she didn't get to see him enough.

His sister, who is my age, grew increasingly jealous. I had just lost my younger brother and was grieving when she began lashing out at me regularly. She's extremely controlling of my boyfriend and me, demanding we do whatever she says and go wherever she wants us to go, including when we are allowed to leave.

She has no respect for any polite or firm boundaries we set, swearing and becoming hysterical and hostile almost every time we interact. She has "kicked me out" of the family gathering, which led to my being completely unwelcome. She tries to gaslight everyone and uses a lot of manipulation tactics to convince others I'm the problem, not her.

Now her husband and her parents lash out at me even at my boyfriend's expense. What is most depressing is that he sides with them because they're "family," and it's his role or he's the problem. This wore my boyfriend and me out, so I removed myself from the situation and moved to another state with my sister. Is there any chance we can have a peaceful future?

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

'IN-LAW' DRAMA IN TEXAS

DEAR DRAMA: No, there is not. Unless you enjoy being abused, the family dynamic you described was extremely unhealthy. You did the right thing to extricate yourself. If a peaceful future is what you're looking for, keep looking.

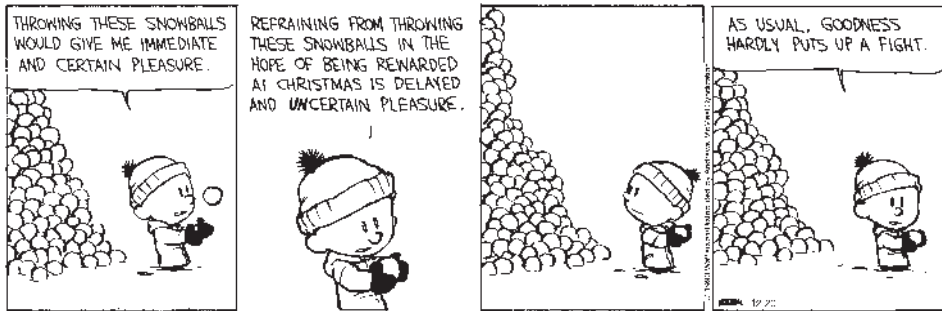
■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



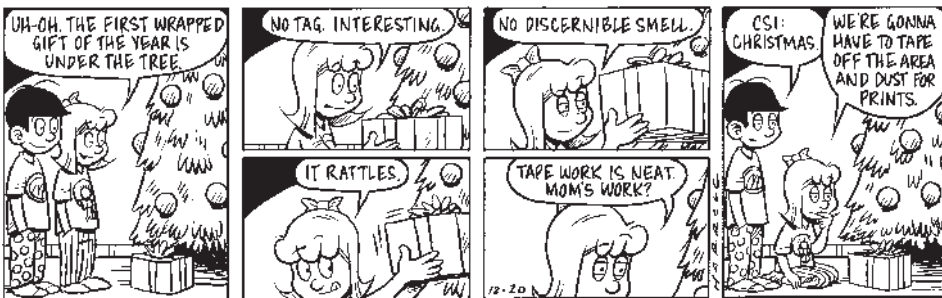
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



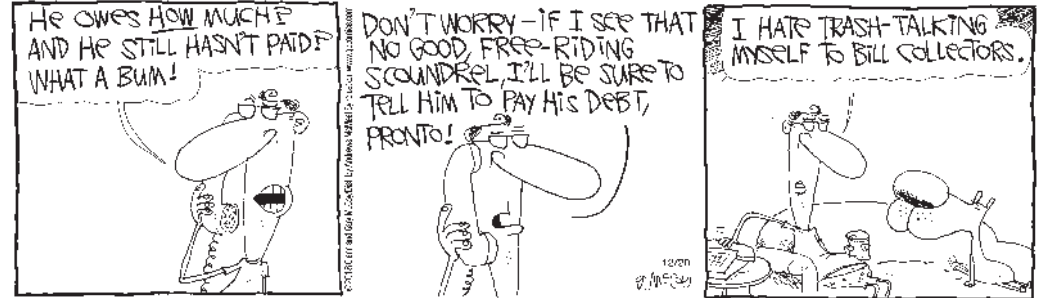
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Star —" (Lucas film)

5 Moment

8 NYPD ranks

12 Length times width

13 Historic period

14 Landed

15 Slim stocker

17 Lucy's partner

18 OK to eat

19 Ingratiate

21 "— -haw!" (cowgirl's cry)

22 Bath powder

23 Journal

26 Ga. neighbor

28 Big wheels at sea

31 Opposite of "sans"

33 Hang low

35 Long lunches?

36 Wrinkle treatment

DOWN

1 Carry on (from the start)

2 Deserlike

3 Mortgage again, for short

4 Did nothing

5 Sargasso wrigglers

6 Goof up

7 West Pointer

8 Bicycle seats

9 Choral group

10 "— pity!"

11 Commotion

16 Staff leader?

20 Slangy denial

23 Science room

24 Ab —

25 Snuggle up on a sofa, say

27 Small battery

29 CEO's degree, often

30 Radiator sound

32 Huge statues

34 Imp

37 VII

39 Pre-weekend cry

42 "Fever" singer

44 Film trophy

45 Metric measure

46 — avis

48 Rani's dress

49 Activist

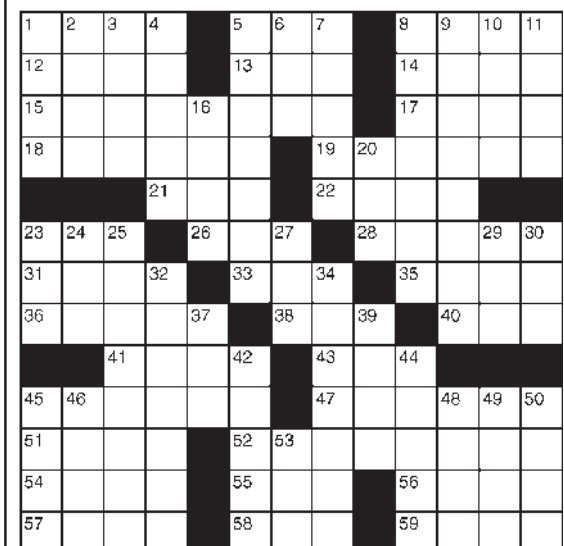
50 Men-only

53 Discoverer's call

Solution time: 23 mins.

DEEP BAH ELLA
CRGO OLE XIII
TRAIL MIX ETON
SSN OAT SCENT
TIGHT JOSTIES
ISFF SAX RAKE
PREMIER TIBET
NEATO OER AKA
AMIR TRANSFIX
DIDI LLS GARL
ALEX AYE IRKS

Yesterday's answer 12-20



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jonah Hill, 40; David Cook, 41; Nicole de Boer, 53; Joel Gretsch, 60.

Happy Birthday: Pay attention to detail, set high standards and prioritize home and family. Use your imagination to change how you use your skills and handle your responsibilities and relationships. An open mind will encourage you to try something new and question what doesn't fit your agenda. Take control instead of letting outside influences take over or lead you astray. Live in the moment; do things your way. Your numbers are 6, 17, 24, 29, 33, 37, 45.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Prepare to pivot and take advantage of an opportunity. Learn all you can and make your move. Changing how you handle or earn money will require attention to ensure you get what you want. Don't let sentiments stand in your way. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Explore the possibilities and search for the path that leads to what you want. A financial gain, gift or intriguing opportunity will point you in the right direction and open doors to a bright future. A change in the dynamics of a relationship looks promising. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Surround yourself with the people who bring out the best in you, and you'll get things done quickly. An unexpected change or surprise will favor you. Share your intentions with someone you like collaborating with, and you'll turn your plans into a reality. ****

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Keep an open mind and refuse to get pulled into an argument or no-win situation. Focus on

your goals and surround yourself with people willing to contribute. A new look or a change of scenery will be uplifting. Choose love over discord. **

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Ask and you shall receive. Talking to someone can offer valuable solutions to problems you face. Attend an event or function to get you in the season's spirit. Don't let a change at home or work upset you. Rethink your strategy. *****

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You can please the ones you love without going over budget. Time spent making memories will be the best gift ever. Get everyone you love to contribute, start new traditions that fit into your lifestyle and take a moment to enjoy the festive season. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Consider your options before leaping forward. Knowing what you are up against will help you decide how to get what you want. Pick up the pace, do your due diligence and look for the path that offers common sense. Put a budget in place. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Explore the possibilities. Don't ponder over what might be; initiate what you want. Change is apparent, and pushing for what you wish to achieve will show strength and open a window of opportunity. Keep your emotions out of the mix and your finger on the pulse. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Question anyone trying to push you down a questionable path. Don't buy into someone else's journey. Build the life that excites you and gives you the freedom to exercise your rights. Surround yourself with people who push you forward. *****

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Take a moment and gather the facts; if you act in haste, you'll hit a roadblock. Take inventory and consider what you need and what you can discard. It's time to pay it forward and let go of things that benefit someone else. **

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Emotional spending will lead to trouble. Refuse to let anyone talk you into purchases that jeopardize your finances. Keep life simple and safe from those who enjoy taking risks. Busy yourself by helping others, staying fit and being good to yourself. ****

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): A good plan will get you further than scrambling. Use your persuasive powers to enlist the help you need to finish things on time. Don't forget to take care of renewals and financial matters that can penalize you if you fall behind. ***

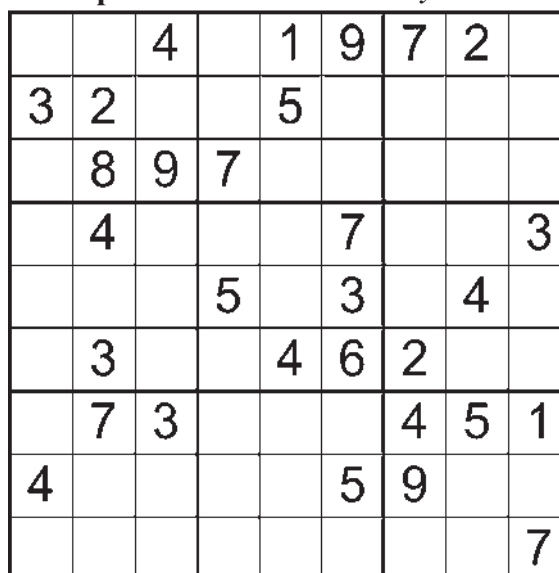
Birthday Baby: You are protective, curious and emotional. You are thorough and decisive.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

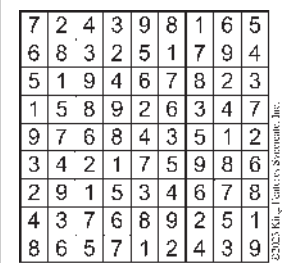
Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



Difficulty: ★★★

12/20

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

FUTURE ENDEAVORS

Solution: 7 letters

A N M I L E S T O N E G P K T
E C O A T T A I N G O D L S E
E C C I R H E C N A I L L A N
X R R O T U U I L I R E A T A
P A F E M A M S Y N T I C S C
R F C O M P L E T E I F S I
E T C U R M L U U L M T O O
S E W O R K O I D I E P E D U
S V V S M I A C S A O V K U S
I E C R I M O S D H I R E K U
O I A E J N I F O R T U N E C
N H R S Q O A T T A C K L E C
A C E U N S I S T A S P I R E
L A E L T T I N T E R E S T S
P R R T N E L A T E D A R T S

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12/20

Accomplish, Achieve, Adulation, Aims, Alliance, Aspire, Attain, Call, Career, Commerce, Committed, Complete, Conquer, Craft, Duty, Efforts, Expression, Field, Fortune, Gain, Goals, Hire, Hopes, Hustle, Improve, Interests, Joint, Kudos, Milestone, Mission, Plan, Result, Seek, Steadfast, Strive, Success, Tackle, Talent, Task, Tenacious, Time, Trade, Work

Yesterday's Answer: Blackjack

The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at: www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Knicks overcome LeBron's 109th triple-double and hold off Lakers



LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jalen Brunson scored 11 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter, and the New York Knicks overcame LeBron James' 109th career triple-double for a 114-109 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday night.

Julius Randle had 27 points and 14 rebounds, and Immanuel Quickley scored 20 points while the Knicks hung tough in the fourth quarter and survived a rally led by James to earn their second road win over the Lakers in 2023.

James had 25 points, 11 assists and 11 rebounds for the Lakers, who have lost three of four since winning the inaugural In-Season Tournament. Anthony Davis had 32 points and 14 rebounds, but Los Angeles couldn't capitalize on numerous chances down the stretch to close the gap.

James scored back-to-back baskets to trim the Knicks' lead to 103-99 with 3:38 left, but Randle rattled home a desperate 3-pointer to beat the shot clock moments later. After winning a jump ball, James missed a 3-pointer with 40 seconds to play that would have trimmed New York's lead to two points, and Randle cherry-picked a dunk on the other end.

The 38-year-old James recorded his second triple-double of the season, and he is the only player to get a triple-double in his 21st NBA season.

Austin Reaves scored 20 points for the Lakers, who couldn't win despite getting Davis, D'Angelo Russell and Cam Reddish back from injury after they all missed an embarrassing loss to San Antonio three nights earlier.

Randle scored 16 points in the first half against his former team, while Brunson contributed three 3-pointers in a strong all-around game as New York rebounded from a loss to the Clippers two nights earlier.

Before their first home game since Dec. 5, the Lakers unveiled a banner celebrating their unbeaten run through the In-Season Tournament, culminating in their victory over Indiana in Las Vegas nine days ago.

With their fans providing polite cheers, the Lakers unveiled the modest black banner—which has room to add future championship years—next to the five Minneapolis Lakers championship banners. They're all hung in a less-prominent spot on their downtown arena's north wall, which is dominated by Los Angeles' 12 gold title banners.

CLIPPERS 151, PACERS 127

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—James Harden scored 21 of



New York Knicks guard Josh Hart (3) blocks a shot-attempt by Los Angeles Lakers guard Austin Reaves, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Dec. 18, 2023, in Los Angeles.

his season-best 35 points in the fourth quarter and had nine assists as the Los Angeles Clippers extended the league's longest active winning streak to eight games by routing the Indiana Pacers 151-127 on Monday night.

Kawhi Leonard added 28 points for Los Angeles and Paul George added 27 against his former team. Facing the league's second-worst defense, the Clippers matched their season-high point total for a half with 77 in the first on the way to their highest-scoring game of the season.

Benedict Mathurin had a season-high 34 points to lead Indiana. Isaiah Jackson scored 15 points while starting in place of injured two-time NBA blocks champion Myles Turner.

All-Star guard Tyrese Haliburton had an off night after missing Saturday's game with a bruised knee. He had eight points, 11 assists and four turnovers.

HAWKS 130, PISTONS 124

ATLANTA (AP)—Trae Young extended his recent hot streak with another double-double, scoring 31 points with 15 assists, as Atlanta handed Detroit their 24th consecutive loss.

The Pistons' last win came on Oct. 28 against Chicago. Detroit is two losses away from matching the NBA's longest losing streak in one season.

The NBA record for the longest losing streak within a single season is 26, shared by the 2010-11 Cleveland Cavaliers and 2013-14 Philadelphia 76ers. The 76ers lost a record 28 consecutive games over the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons.

Cade Cunningham led the

Pistons with a career-high 43 points. Bojan Bogdanovic had 25 points.

TIMBERWOLVES 112, HEAT 108

MIAMI (AP)—Anthony Edwards scored 32 points, Karl-Anthony Towns added 18 and Minnesota clamped down in the second half to beat Miami.

Naz Reid scored 15, Mike Conley added 12 and Rudy Gobert grabbed 16 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

Minnesota improved to 20-5, tying idle Boston for the NBA's best record. The Timberwolves gave up just 42 points in the second half, after trailing by as many as 17 points in the early going.

Tyler Herro and Bam Adebayo returned from long injury absences and combined for 47 points for the Heat; Herro scored 25, Adebayo had 22. Jimmy Butler scored 15, Duncan Robinson 14 and Josh Richardson 13 for the Heat.

BULLS 108, 76ERS 104

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Coby White scored 24 points and Chicago held on to snap Philadelphia's six-game winning streak.

Former Sixer Nikola Vucevic chipped in 23 points while DeMar DeRozan added 15 for the Bulls.

The Bulls have won six of their last nine even though they are playing without All-Star Zach LaVine, who has been sidelined with left foot inflammation and is likely still a little bit away from returning.

Joel Embiid had 40 points and 13 rebounds, his 11th straight game with 30 or more points and 10 or more boards.

Tyrese Maxey added 29 points in the 76ers' first loss to a team without a winning record this season after starting 12-0 against sub-.500 teams. No other Sixers player was able to crack double figures.

CAVALIERS 135, ROCKETS 130, OT

CLEVELAND (AP)—Donovan Mitchell scored 37 points, Sam Merrill had a career-high 19 off the bench and Cleveland earned its 11th consecutive overtime victory by beating Houston.

Merrill had five points and Max Strus added four in the extra period, when Cleveland outscored Houston 13-8 to match the second-longest OT winning streak in NBA history. New Orleans owns the record with 13 victories in a row from 2006-08.

Rockets center Alperin Sengun made one free throw with 36.8 seconds left in regulation to tie it. Caris LeVert missed a 3-pointer on the Cavaliers' subsequent possession and Sengun's fadeaway at the buzzer rimmed out.

Fred VanVleet had season highs of 27 points and 17 assists, along with eight rebounds, and Sengun had 24 points, eight rebounds and six assists. The Rockets are 2-10 on the road and 11-1 at home.

THUNDER 116, GRIZZLIES 97

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 30 points and nine rebounds in three quarters to help Oklahoma City beat Memphis in the Grizzlies' final game before Ja Morant returns from his suspension.

Gilgeous-Alexander hit a game-winner at Denver on Saturday night and followed

it up by making 8 of 18 field goals and 13 of 14 free throws against Memphis.

Chet Holmgren had 17 points, seven blocks and six rebounds. Josh Giddey added 16 points and 12 rebounds for the Thunder, who have won four of five.

Ziaire Williams scored 19 points and Desmond Bane added 17 for the Grizzlies (6-19), who have lost five straight. Jaren Jackson Jr., who had scored at least 40 points in two of his past three games, finished with 11.

NUGGETS 130, MAVERICKS 104

DENVER (AP)—Jamal Murray finished with 22 points, going 4 for 4 from 3-point range, to help Denver race past short-handed Dallas.

Aaron Gordon tied a season high with 21 points, while Nikola Jokic added eight points, nine rebounds and seven assists in a game where the Nuggets starters got the fourth quarter off. The Denver bench outscored the Mavericks reserves by a 62-34 margin to help the Nuggets bounce back from a home loss to Oklahoma City over the weekend.

Leading 77-70 with 6:48 remaining in the third, the Nuggets pulled away on the strength of a 21-10 run to close out the quarter. Murray helped ignite the pivotal run and had 10 points in the period. He's finding his shooting touch after dealing with hamstring and ankle injuries this season.

Luka Doncic scored 22 of his 38 points in the second quarter to keep Dallas close. He also had 11 rebounds. The Mavericks were missing Kyrie Irving (heel), Josh Green (elbow), Max Kleber (toe) and

Dereck Lively II (ankle).

RAPTORS 114, HORNETS 99

TORONTO (AP)—Pascal Siakam scored eight of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, Gary Trent Jr. had season highs of 22 points and 10 rebounds, and Toronto rallied past a Charlotte team missing Miles Bridges and three other starters.

Bridges was denied entrance to Canada due to his past legal problems, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press. Hornets coach Steve Clifford would not comment on the reason for Bridges' absence before the game.

Charlotte was already without injured starters LaMelo Ball (right ankle), Gordon Hayward (illness) and Mark Williams (back), plus key reserve Cody Martin (left knee).

Toronto's Scottie Barnes scored 22 points and matched his career high with 17 rebounds. Dennis Schroder scored 13 points and Precious Achiuwa had 12. The Raptors outscored the Hornets 35-18 in the final period.

JAZZ 125, NETS 108

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Collin Sexton and Talen Horton-Tucker scored 27 points apiece to lead Utah over Brooklyn.

Sexton had his fifth straight 20-point game to help Utah win for the third time in four games. Horton-Tucker also had a team-high six assists. Lauri Markkanen added 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Walker Kessler tallied 14 points, 14 rebounds and five blocks.

Cam Thomas led the Nets with 32 points, and Spencer Dinwiddie chipped in 17 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds. Brooklyn's three-game winning streak against Utah was snapped.

Wizards 143, Wizards 131

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Domantas Sabonis had his 35th career triple-double with 28 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists as the Sacramento Kings beat the Washington Wizards 143-131 on Monday night.

De'Aaron Fox scored 12 of his 30 points during Sacramento's 46-point third quarter, and Keegan Murray added 25 on a night when six Kings scored in double figures. Harrison Barnes had 19, Kevin Huerter 14 and Malik Monk finished with 10 as Sacramento (16-9) won for the fourth time in five games.

Jordan Poole matched his career high with eight 3-pointers and scored 28 points for the Wizards. Kyle Kuzma added 27, but Washington (4-22) has lost 17 of its last 19 games.

Lock's late touchdown pass rallies Seahawks to victory over sliding Eagles



SEATTLE (AP)—Amid the flood of emotions that continued long after he walked off the field a winner, Drew Lock paused briefly to reflect.

Rare is the chance to have a moment like what the Seattle Seahawks' backup quarterback experienced on Monday night.

"I think it was just the over-the-top of feeling of you don't get very many moments, you don't very many opportunities in this league," Lock said. "And with every opportunity you get, you need to be as ready as you can be."

Lock threw a 29-yard touchdown pass to Jaxon Smith-Njigba with 28 seconds left to cap a 92-yard drive, and the Seahawks stunned the Philadelphia Eagles 20-17, ending a four-game skid and getting back into NFC playoff contention.

Seattle (7-7) rallied behind Lock, who moved the team the length of the field for its longest touchdown drive this season and found the Seahawks' rookie first-round



Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba (11) makes a touchdown catch in front of Philadelphia Eagles cornerback James Bradberry (24) during the second half of an NFL football game, Monday, Dec. 18, 2023, in Seattle.

Analysis: Josh Allen, Bills show how quickly things can turn around in NFL

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Turnarounds happen quickly in the NFL.

Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills have quieted talk about coach Sean McDermott's job security with a pair of impressive wins.

The Dallas Cowboys suddenly look like pretenders because they can't win on the road.

Joe Flacco has gone from his couch to becoming a Cleveland folk hero in less than a month.

Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs just needed a trip to New England to get back on the winning track.

Tommy DeVito was the toast of New York and New Jersey until the Saints whipped the Giants and mocked his celebrations.

The Eagles are shaking things up like a desperate team searching for answers instead of a division leader battling for the No. 1 seed.

The up-and-down Jaguars still sit in first place despite three straight losses.

At least Brock Purdy, Christian McCaffrey and the San Francisco 49ers are consistent.

The game of Week 15 turned into a dud when Buffalo dominated Dallas and exposed the Cowboys in a 31-10 victory Sunday.

In the process, Dak Prescott's MVP bid took a hit.

Allen helped the Bills (8-6) save their season in a win at Kansas City last week and watched James Cook carry the offense by leading a stellar rushing attack against the Cowboys.

Allen completed only seven passes against Dallas because Micah Parsons and the rest of the defense couldn't stop Cook, who ran for 179 yards.

"We weren't physical enough," Cowboys cornerback Stephon Gilmore said. "They were more physical than we were."

Now, nobody is talking about firing McDermott. Buffalo still has a shot to win the AFC East. The Bills need to gain one game on the Dolphins (10-4) to make their showdown in Miami in Week 18 for first place. The Cowboys (10-4) visit the Dolphins next week while the Bills visit the Chargers (5-9).

"The NFL is a one-week-at-a-time league," McDermott said. "We're on a short week. We've got a couple guys banged-up. We have to go out West so that'll be a challenge in itself."

Flacco knows all about the fickle nature of life in the NFL.

The former Super Bowl MVP was unemployed before the Browns signed him to the practice squad on Nov. 20. He stepped into the starting lineup three weeks ago and has led Cleveland to consecutive wins

with 300-yard passing performances in both games.

Flacco overcame three picks and rallied the Browns to a 20-17 victory over Chicago. Cleveland (9-5) leads the AFC wild-card race despite starting four quarterbacks this season.

"Obviously, Joe made some unbelievable throws there when we needed them," Browns coach Kevin Stefanski said. "Just can't say enough good things about how he played in that fourth quarter."

The Chiefs avoided the first three-game losing streak in the Mahomes era with a 27-17 win over the hapless Patriots.

Mahomes threw for 305 yards and two TDs and also had two interceptions, including one on a ball that bounced out of Kadarius Toney's hands. Mahomes, who threw a tantrum on the sideline last week after Toney's offside penalty negated a go-ahead score in a loss to Buffalo, was fuming after the play.

But Toney's mistake didn't cost the Chiefs this time around.

"Losing three straight in this league really puts you in a tough spot and I thought the guys did a good job," Mahomes said. "That's a really good defense. Offensively, we scored points early. On defense, shut the door, kind of like they've been doing these last few weeks, but we have to continue to get

better and better."

The Giants had won three in a row behind DeVito before running into New Orleans. DeVito was sacked seven times in a 24-6 loss and the Saints mimicked his finger celebration after big plays.

The loss put New York (5-9) on the brink of playoff elimination.

The Eagles clinched a playoff berth without taking the field but they made a big change. Coming off lopsided losses to San Francisco and Dallas, coach Nick Sirianni stripped defensive coordinator Sean Desai of playcalling duties and gave senior defensive assistant Matt Patricia that role.

With Jalen Hurts questionable because of an illness, the Eagles (10-3) have to beat Seattle (6-7) on Monday night to keep pace with the 49ers in the race for the No. 1 seed.

Purdy tossed four TD passes and McCaffrey had 187 scrimmage yards and three scores in a 45-29 rout over Arizona.

The 49ers (11-3) have won five in a row after losing three straight. They've been the NFL's most complete team and have the inside track on the NFC's No. 1 seed.

But with a showdown against the AFC-leading Baltimore Ravens (11-3) coming up Christmas night, that can change in a hurry.

pick for the biggest catch of his young career.

On third-and-10, Smith-Njigba beat James Bradberry off the line and Lock's throw was perfect to cap an unlikely comeback from an early 10-0 deficit. Lock, who made his second straight start in place of the injured Geno Smith, connected with DK Metcalf three times on the decisive drive, including much-needed chunk plays of 18 and 34 yards.

Seattle moved into a logjam with four teams currently at .500 that are battling for the NFC's last two playoff spots, while Philadelphia (10-4) lost its third straight and wasted a chance to move a game ahead of Dallas in the NFC East. The defending NFC champion Eagles have already secured a playoff spot.

Philadelphia had one last opportunity, but Julian Love made his second interception of the fourth quarter, picking off Jalen Hurts' deep pass intended for A.J. Brown and just getting his feet down inbounds.

"I was watching (Brown) that entire play. I was in the post, I saw a double move, I just took off. I saw the ball floating and I must be living right because I got my feet in, thankfully," Love said.

Love also picked off Hurts in the end zone on a deep shot for Quez Watkins with 8:08 remaining to prevent the Eagles from extending their 17-13 lead.

Lock's touchdown pass to

Smith-Njigba was a play Seattle ran earlier in the game, and Lock knew if he got single coverage again, the throw was headed to the rookie.

"Sure enough, they gave us one-on-one. It was kind of the perfect look," said Lock, who finished 22 of 33 for 208 yards.

It was the second game-winning touchdown in the fourth quarter for Smith-Njigba, who had one against Cleveland. And it looked awfully familiar to a catch he made for Ohio State in the Rose Bowl against Utah.

"Definitely kind of similar. Same kind of corner. I've been making catches like that for a long time," Smith-Njigba said.

Lock was also the lead blocker on Kenneth Walker III's 23-yard touchdown run in the third quarter that pulled Seattle even at 10-10. Walker finished with 86 yards rushing.

Hurts, who was questionable to play with an illness, had a difficult night. He had 13 carries for 82 yards and two touchdowns, but he was just 17 of 31 passing for 143 yards with the two picks.

Hurts was unable to practice after getting sick on Saturday. He flew separately from his teammates on a private jet to Seattle and it wasn't clear he would play until the list of inactive players was announced 90 minutes before kickoff.

Hurts didn't look like he felt great, but for the first three quarters he played well enough. He capped a pair of long scoring drives with touchdown runs of 3 yards and 1 yard. Hurts now has 14 rushing touchdowns, tied with Cam Newton in 2011 for the most by a quarterback in a season.

"I liked the opportunity to go out there and execute regardless what the circumstances are and I didn't do a good job with that," Hurts said. "I didn't lead good enough. I didn't do a good enough job in any circumstance."

Smith remained sidelined by a groin injury, although he was active for the game and warmed up on his own a couple hours before kickoff. Seattle coach Pete Carroll said the decision to start Lock was made about 90 minutes before the game.

Lock didn't put up big numbers, but he avoided major mistakes and was great on the final drive, when he completed 5 of 10 passes and accounted for all 92 yards.

"It's a memory you're never going to lose. He's going to hold on to this Monday night forever," Carroll said. "He earned it, he deserved it. He played up to the great moments in the game and came through."

Saipan Marathon 2024 early bird deadline on Dec. 31



The early bird registration deadline is Dec.

31, 2023, for Saipan Marathon 2024, slated for March 9 in The Marianas.

A certified measured course by World Athletics in cooperation with AIMS, Saipan Marathon is co-organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority and Northern Marianas Athletics and is sanctioned under the Northern Marianas Athletics rules and regulations.

Early bird rates are \$90 for the full marathon, \$60 for the half marathon, and \$60 for the 10K and 5K. Full marathon participants must be age 18 or older. Half marathon participants must be age 14 or older. With valid photo ID, students ages 18 or younger by Dec. 31, 2023, may register for 10K or 5K for \$40 through Dec. 31, 2023. Fees increase incrementally beginning on Jan. 1, 2024, and again on Feb. 1, 2024. The deadline to register is 5pm ChST on March 7, 2024, and participants may register at www.racerooster.com.

A new course highlighting iconic sites from The Marianas' rich history awaits full marathon runners. The road race will traverse sites from the various eras of Marianas



JUNJI TAKASAGO

The full marathon course will pass a hospital and pharmacy from the Japanese period in the first half of the 1900s which now house the Northern Mariana Islands Museum of History & Culture.



JUNJI TAKASAGO

The Saipan Marathon 2024 will traverse sites from the various eras of Marianas history, including the Last Command Post in Marpi.

history, including pre-history, the Spanish administration, the Japanese administration in the early 1900s, World War II, and modern history as a U.S. Commonwealth.

"Although The Marianas are small in size—Saipan is only 13 miles long—we have a rich and diverse history, and the remnants and influences of that history can still be experienced today. Our full marathon course this year will give runners a chance to see that for themselves," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "We look forward to welcoming all runners to our beautiful shores in March 2024 and to sharing our island history and our way of life."

The start and finish line for all courses of Saipan Marathon will be at American Memorial Park, a U.S. national park honoring those who gave their lives during the Marianas Campaign of World War II. The park includes a visitors' center, several memorials, and WWII artifacts. The marathon start and finish line are at Micro Beach, also

known as Ppiyal Ooláang, a site where traditional indigenous navigators observe the heavens, winds, and ocean at sunset to predict sailing conditions in a tradition of sailing across the Pacific using indigenous navigational skills based solely on natural phenomena, a practice still seen in The Marianas today.

The full marathon course will pass a hospital and pharmacy from the Japanese period in the first half of the 1900s which now house the Northern Mariana Islands Museum of History & Culture. Also along the way is Sugar King Park honoring "Sugar King" Haruji Matsue who developed a thriving sugar industry in The Marianas during the Japanese administration. The park includes a statue of Matsue, a locomotive engine from the era, and Kattori Shrine, named after the famed Shintō shrine in the city of Katori in Chiba Prefecture, Japan. The full marathon course will also take runners into the lush and quiet roads of Marpi in northern Saipan and pass two significant World War II sites, the Last Command Post and Banzai Cliff.

Cash prizes will be awarded for top finishers and by age division in the marathon. Participants will receive a limited edition official Saipan Marathon T-shirt, official Saipan Marathon medal, Certificate of Completion and one entry to the awards banquet, also on March 9.

For more information, visit <https://racerooster.com/events/2024/78587/saipan-marathon-2024> or www.mymarianas.com or contact MVA Community Projects coordinator Ed Diaz at (670) 664-3210 or ediaz@mymarianas.com. (MVA)

TMS

From page 20

consecutively and quickly. Nick Sablan made the only hit of the game for HMS, while the other batters were walked or reached on fielding errors.

In other games that day, Dan Dan Middle School defeated Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, 13-7, and Mount Carmel School beat HMS JV in a lopsided, 29-9 final.

Last Dec. 9, TMS edged HMS JV, 25-3; HMS won

their second game, 12-4 against DMS; and MCS routed ChaCha Ocean View Middle School, 28-10.

Their first games of the season last Dec. 4 saw TMS win over COVMS, 11-3; HMS outslug FMS, 14-2; and DMS rake HMS JV, 27-9.

At press time, results of the Dec. 16 games were not yet available.588

The Dec. 18 games were rescheduled, with the championship round scheduled for next year from Jan. 11 to Jan. 13 at the Capital Hill Softball Field.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hopwood Middle School junior varsity softball team poses for a photo in their campus yesterday.

ORTIZO

From page 20

She said her next running goal is to join a full marathon once she settles in her new home in the West Coast.

"To my fellow members of Run Saipan, I had a great time running with you all in every race that we had. Thank you to president Edward Dela Cruz Jr., secretary/treasurer Dr. Ron Snyder, and board member Robin Sapong for making Run Saipan a family of runners. Wherever I go, I will always be a proud member of Run Saipan. I hope I can be a lifetime member," she said.

Aside from her Run Saipan family, Ortizo said she will also absolutely miss Saipan's stunning natural scenery.

"Most especially the beaches, the peaceful and simple life, no traffic, hearing those bird sounds while running on the pathway, the north side of Saipan which we do our long run every weekend. I'll also miss my running buddies, my soccer family, and all my friends here."

She also made special mention of Northern Mariana Islands Football president and TanHoldings president Jerry Tan for helping her family out during their most dire moment.

"A special thank you to Mr. Jerry Tan, who helped our family during Typhoon Yutu when we lost our house. He gave us shelter for three months until we were able to build our house again. His generosity is beyond compare."

Dela Cruz said Run Saipan will miss Ortizo greatly.

"Jessica is one of our dedicated and loyal members. No one can question her commitment to the roads. The club and the running community wish her safe travels as she embarks in a new chapter in her life. She will always be a member of our run club and Saipan running community," he said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jessica Ortizo also played for TanHoldings FC.

ERRATUM

The article "Emmanuel KOs lakopo in ROF co-main event" that was published last Tuesday, Dec. 19, should've read "Emmanuel TKOs lakopo in ROF co-main event." Our apologies.

ELEVEN

From page 20

partner John Masga."

Lee said the team played "smart" and knew they needed to take as many chances as they could and execute them perfectly—as shown by Tanapon Unsa and Sunjoon Tenorio's two goals.

Lee added that the match "was a big team effort and we played perfectly with what we were given and understanding what was needed of us. It felt

amazing bringing home the championship for our team, supporters, our sponsors, Tribe and Drip Pacific and the island itself.

"We felt a sense of pride representing the NMI in this match and we are extremely happy about winning and getting the result. We are a new club and for us to achieve something so great in a short period of time shows the effort of our boys on and off the field and we are so proud," said Lee.



**Knicks overcome
LeBron's 109th
triple-double
and hold off
Lakers.**

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**Saipan
Marathon 2024
early bird
deadline on
Dec. 31.**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Eleven Tiger claws way to championship

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's Eleven Tiger Football Club clawed their way to victory in the Inaugural Marianas Club Championship.

Eleven Tiger had home field advantage and the crowd on their side as they edged Guam's Wings FC, 2-1, last Saturday at a lively and jam-packed NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The championship was sponsored by the East Asian Football Confederation, of which the CNMI and Guam are members.

Marianas Soccer League 1 champions Eleven Tiger was crowned champion for a reason and they showed off their skills and teamwork again—this time against a Guam team—one they had not played against before.

Possession did not grace both teams easily as they were evenly matched throughout, but after a quiet first half, Eleven Tigers' Tanapon Unsa struck gold with a goal that slipped past Guam goalie Jacob Anthony Toves in the 54th minute.

Wings' offense was on scramble mode and were looking to even it up quickly as time wound down, but Eleven Tigers' Sunjoon Tenorio grabbed a foothold and made a strong beeline to the goal for a 2-0 advantage.

Too many missed opportunities for Wings stacked up and



Eleven Tiger celebrates their win over Guam's Wings FC as the home crowd cheers them on after the conclusion of the Marianas Club Championships last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center.



Eleven Tiger's Jamin Elliot was the Marianas Club Championship's most valuable player. Right is Guam Football Association president Tino San Gil and left is NMIFA executive committee member Alex Sablan.

the end of the match was nigh when they finally snagged the net in the 90th minute by way of Yvan Tcheugoue. By then, it was too little too late and the home team and crowd exploded into cheers as Eleven Tiger won the first Marianas Club Championships.

The most valuable player of the championship was Eleven Tiger's impenetrable goalie Jamin Elliot.

Eleven Tiger also included team captain Dave Mafnas, John Masga, Unsa, Tenorio, Elliot, Ariel Narvaez Jr., Jonne Navarro, Anthony Austria, Jerald Aquino, Akira Kado-kura, Anthony Bergancia, Dane

Hodges, Saixian Bagsic, Brandon Tenorio, and Seho Baek.

Eleven Tiger coach Bada Lee said the matchup was "very tough" as they had no knowledge or information about their opponent. He said that Wings was "a very good team and they came with a lot of energy and high soccer IQ. The team played exactly the way we needed to play."

With that, Lee said they understood they weren't going to be able to control the ball or outplay them, so "we focused more on our defense with the leadership of our captain Dave Mafnas and his center back

See ELEVEN on Page 19

Ortizo says goodbye to Saipan

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR



Run Saipan veteran Jessica Ortizo will leave Saipan today after deciding to rejoin her children in Washington state.

The 53-year-old administrative assistant has dominated her age group in many running races on Saipan and also played for Tan-Holdings FC.

While she is changing addresses, the native of Davao City, Philippines said she will continue her membership with Run Saipan, which she shares memorable runs with.

On the top of Ortizo's memorable running events on Saipan was the exhausting Trinity Run.

"The three-day event of running is a killer and challenging and the beer mile because I had so much fun with my friends. I will definitely miss everything like the year-round of running events and the rest of the Run Saipan family," she said.

Ortizo said she only

started running competitively due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"After the pandemic when there's no soccer, I started to look for other sports that I can do alone as my daily exercise. So, I started running along the pathway like almost every day. Since then, I never stopped. I remember my first race was the 10K jungle run which I enjoyed so much."

See ORTIZO on Page 19



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jessica Ortizo in action in one of the many Run Saipan races she took part in the last couple of years.

TMS leads boys softball

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Tanapag Middle School Tatagas boys varsity softball team lead the Inaugural SBL-PSS Inter-scholastic Boys Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024.

As of Dec. 11, the Tatagas were undefeated as they reeled in three wins, and handed HMS their first loss in a 0-5 game for a 2-1 record.

The Tatagas inched closer and closer to home plate in the first couple of innings but it amounted to nothing, but in the third inning, the floodgates opened.

Ayden Magofna, Justin Garde, Aiken Norita, Leon Neth, and Abraham Falig all zoomed past the bases into home plate as HMS' pitcher Jesus Santos could not control their offense.

HMS tried to retaliate but their bats were just not there in this game and were retired

See TMS on Page 19



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Hopwood Middle School varsity softball team poses with their coaches Eric Palacios, left, kneeling, and coach Henry Iguel yesterday.